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Stories by American Authors.

VII.

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Francis Morris

'893.



Very truly yours,
Octave Thuret

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VII.

THE BISHOP'S VAGABOND.

By OCTAVE THANET.

LOST.

By EDWARD BELLAMY.

KIRBY'S COALS OF FIRE.

By LOUISE STOCKTON.

**PASSAGES FROM THE JOURNAL OF A
SOCIAL WRECK.**

By MARGARET FLOYD.

STELLA GRAYLAND.

By JAMES T. MCKAY.

THE IMAGE OF SAN DONATO.

By VIRGINIA W. JOHNSON.

NEW YORK
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THE BISHOP'S VAGABOND.

BY OCTAVE THANET.

THE Bishop was walking down the wide Aiken street. He was the only bishop in Aiken, and they made much of him, accordingly, though his diocese was in the West, which of course was a drawback.

He was a tall man, with a handsome, kind face under his shovel hat ; portly, as a bishop should be, and having a twinkle of humor in his eye. He dressed well and soberly, in the decorous habiliments of his office. " So English," the young ladies of the Highland Park Hotel used to whisper to each other, admiring him. Perhaps this is the time to mention that the Bishop was a widower.

To-day he walked at a gentle pace, repeatedly lifting his hat in answer to a multitude of salutations ; for it was a bright April day, and the street was thronged. There was the half-humorous in-

congruity between the people and the place always visible in a place where two thirds of the population are a mere pleasant-weather growth, dependent on the climate. Groups of Northerners stood in the red and blue and green door-ways of the gay little shops, or sauntered past them ; easily distinguished by their clothing and their air of unaccustomed and dissatisfied languor. One could pick out at a glance the new-comers just up from Florida ; they were so decorated with alligator-tooth jewelry, and gazed so contemptuously at the oranges and bananas in the windows. The native Southerners were equally conspicuous, in the case of the men, from their careless dress and placid demeanor. A plentiful sprinkling of black and yellow skins added to the picturesque character of the scene. Over it all hung a certain holiday air, the reason for which one presently detected to be an almost universal wearing of flowers,—bunches of roses, clusters of violets or trailing arbutus, or twigs of yellow jasmine ; while bare-footed boys, with dusky faces and gleaming teeth, proffered nosegays at every corner. The Aiken nosegay has this peculiarity, — the flowers are wedged together with unexampled tightness. Truly enough may the little venders boast, “ Dey’s orful lots o’ roses in dem, mister ; you’ll fin’ w’en you onties ’em.” No one of the pedestrians appeared to be in a hurry ; and under all the holiday air of flowers there was a pathetic disproportion of pale and weary faces.

But if they did not hurry on the sidewalk, there was plenty of motion in the street ; horses in Aiken being always urged to their full speed,—which, to be sure, is not alarming. Now, carriages were whirling by and riders galloping in both directions. The riders were of every age, sex, and condition : pretty girls in jaunty riding habits, young men with polo mallets, old men and children, and grinning negroes lashing their sorry hacks with twigs. Of the carriages, it would be hard to tell which was the more noticeable, the smartness of the vehicles or the jaded depression of the thin beasts that pulled them. Where Park and Ashland avenues meet at right angles the crowd was most dense. There, on one side, one sees the neat little post-office and the photographer's gallery, and off in the distance the white pine towers of the hotel, rising out of its green hills ; on the other, the long street slowly climbs the hill, through shops and square white houses with green blinds, set back in luxuriant gardens. At this corner two persons were standing, a young man and a young woman, both watching the Bishop. The young woman was tall, handsome, and—always an attraction in Aiken—evidently not an invalid. The erect grace of her slim figure, the soft and varying color on her cheek, the light in her beautiful brown eyes,—all were the unmistakable signs of health. The young man was a good-looking little fellow, perfectly dressed, and having an expression of indolent amusement on his delicate features. He had

light yellow hair, cut closely enough to show the fine outline of his head, a slight mustache waxed at the ends, and a very fair complexion.

The young woman was speaking. "Do you see to whom my father is talking, Mr. Talboys?" said she.

"Plainly, he has picked up his vagabond."

"Demming? Yes, it *is* Demming."

"Now I wonder, do you know," said the young man, "what induces the Bishop to waste his time on such hopeless moral trash as that." He spoke in a pleasant, slow voice, with an English accent.

"It isn't hopeless to him, I suppose," she answered. Her voice also was slow, and it was singularly sweet.

"I think it must be his sense of humor," he continued. "The Bishop loves a joke, and Demming is a droll fellow. He is a sort of grim joke himself, you know, a high-toned gentleman who lives by begging. He brings his bag to the hotels every day. Of course you have heard him talk, Miss Louise. His strong card is his wife. 'Th' ole 'ooman's nigh blin', '—here Talboys gave a very good imitation of the South Carolina local drawl—" 'an' she's been so tenderly raised she cyan't live 'thout cyoffee three times a day! ' "

"I have heard that identical speech," said Louise, smiling as Talboys knew she would smile over the imitation. "He gets a good deal from the Northerners, I fancy."

"Enough to enable him to be a pillar of the

saloons," said Talboys. "He is a lavish soul, and treats the crowd when he prospers in his profession. Once his money gave out before the crowd's thirst. 'Never min', gen'lemen,' says our friend, 'res' easy. I see the Bishop agwine up the street; I'll git a dollar from him. Yes, wait; I won't be gwine long.'"

"And he got the money?"

"Oh, yes. I believe he got it to buy quinine for 'th' ole 'ooman,' who was down with the break-bone fever. He is like Yorick, 'a fellow of infinite jest'—in the way of lying. He talks well, too. You ought to hear him discourse on politics. As he gets most of his revenue from the North, he is kind enough to express the friendliest sentiments. 'I wuz opposed to the wah's bein'' is his standard speech, 'an' now I'm opposed to its continnerin'.' For all that, he was a mild kind of Ku-Klux."

"He did it for money, he says," returned Louise. "The funniest thing about him is his absolute frankness after he is found out in any trick. He doesn't seem to have any sense of shame, and will fairly chuckle in my father's face as he is owning up to some piece of roguery."

"You know he was in the Confederate army. Fought well, too, I'm told. What does he do when the Northerners are gone? Aiken must be a pretty bare begging ground."

"Oh, he has a wretched little cabin out in the woods," said Louise, "and a sweet-potato

patch. He raises sweet potatoes and persimmons—”

“And pigs,” Talboys interrupted. “I saw some particularly lean swine grubbing about in the sand for snakes. They feed them on snakes, in the pine barrens, you know, which serves two purposes: kills the snakes and fills the pigs. Entertainment for man and beast, don’t you see? By the way, talking of being entertained, I know of a fine old Southern manor-house over the bridge.”

Louise shook her head incredulously. “I have lost faith in Southern manor-houses. Ever since I came South I have sought them vainly. All the way from Atlanta I risked my life, putting my head out of the car windows, to see the plantations. At every scrubby-looking little station we passed, the conductor would say, ‘Mighty nice people live heah; great deal of wealth heah before the wah!’ Then I would recklessly put my head out. I expected to see the real Southern mansion of the novelists, with enormous piazzas and Corinthian pillars and beautiful avenues; and the white-washed cabins of the negroes in the middle distance; and the planter, in a white linen suit and a wide straw hat, sitting on the piazza drinking mint juleps. Well, I don’t really think I expected the planter, but I did hope for the house. Nothing of the kind. All I saw was a moderate-sized square house, with piazzas and a flat roof, all sadly in need of paint. Now, I’m like Betsy Prig: ‘I

don't believe there's no sich person.' It's a myth, like the good old Southern cooking."

"Oh, they do exist," said Talboys, his eyes brightening over this long speech, delivered in the softest voice in the world. "There are houses in Charleston and Beaufort and on the Lower Mississippi that suggest the novels; but, on the whole, I think the novelists have played us false. We expect to find the ruins of luxury and splendor and all that sort of thing in the South; but in point of fact there was very little luxury about Southern life. They had plenty of service, such as it was, and plenty of horses, and that was about all; their other household arrangements were painfully primitive. All the same, sha'n't we go over the bridge?"

Louise assented, and they turned and went their way in the opposite direction.

Meanwhile, the Bishop and his vagabond were talking earnestly. The vagabond seemed to belong to the class known as "crackers." Poverty, sickness, and laziness were written in every flutter of his rags, in every uncouth curve or angle of his long, gaunt figure and sallow face. A mass of unkempt iron-gray hair fell about his sharp features, further hidden by a grizzly beard. His black frock coat had once adorned the distinguished and ample person of a Northern senator; it wrinkled dismally about Demming's bones, while its soiled gentility was a queer contrast to his nether garments of ragged butternut, his coarse

boots, and an utterly disreputable hat, through a hole of which a tuft of hair had made its way, and waved plume-wise in the wind. Around the hat was wound a strip of rusty crape. The Bishop quickly noticed this woeful addition to the man's garb. He asked the reason.

"She's done gone, Bishop," answered Demming, winking his eyes hard before rubbing them with a grimy knuckle; "th' ole 'ooman's done lef' me 'lone in the worl'. It's an orful 'fliction!" He made so pitiful a figure, standing there in the sandy road, the wind fluttering his poor token of mourning, that the Bishop's kind heart was stirred.

"I am truly sorry, Demming," said he. "Isn't this very sudden?"

"Laws, yes, Bishop, powerful suddint an' on-precedented. 'Pears 's if I couldn't git myself to b'lieve it, nohow. Yes'day ev'nin' she wuz chipper's evah, out pickin' pine buds; an' this mahnin' she woked me up, an' says she, 'I reckon you'd better fix the cyoffee yo'self, Demming, I feel so cu'se,' says she. An' so I did; an' when I come to gin it ter her, oh, Lordy, oh, Lordy!—'scuse me, Bishop,—she wuz cole an' dead! Doctor cyouldn't do nuthin', w'en I brung 'im. Rheumatchism o' th' heart, he says. It wuz turrible suddint, onyhow. 'Minded me o' them thar games with the thimble, you know, Bishop,—now ye see it, an' now ye don'; yes, 's quick 's thet!"

The Bishop opened his eyes at the comparison; but Demming had turned away, with a quivering

lip, to bury his face in his hands, and the Bishop was reproached for his criticism of the other's *naïf* phraseology. Now, to be frank, he had approached Demming prepared to show severity, rather than sympathy, because of the cracker's last flagrant wrong-doing; but his indignation, righteous though it was, took flight before grief. Forgetting judgment in mercy, he proffered all the consolations he could summon, spiritual and material, and ended by asking Demming if he had made any preparations for the funeral.

"Thet thar's w'at I'm yere for," replied the man, mournfully. "You know jes' how I'm fixed. Cyoffins cost a heap; an' then thar's the shroud, an' I ain't got no reg'lar fun'al cloze, an' 'pears 's ef 't 'ud be a conserlation t' have a kerridge or two. She wuz a bawn lady, Bishop; we're kin ter some o' the real aristocracy o' Carolina,—we are, fur a fac'; an' I'd kin' o' like ter hev her ride ter her own fun'al, onyhow."

"Then you will need money?"

"Not frum you, Bishop, not a red cent; but if you uns over thar," jerking his thumb in the direction of the white pine towers,—“if you all 'd kin' o' gin me a small sum, an' ef you'd jes' start a paper, as 't were, an' al-so ef you yo'self 'ud hev the gre't kin'ness ter come out an' conduc' the fun'al obskesies, it 'ud gratify the corpse powerful. Mistress Demming 'll be entered* then like a bawn

* It is supposed that Mr. Demming intended to say “interred.”

lady. Yes, sir, thet thar, an' no mo', 's w'at I'm emboldened ter ax frum you."

The Bishop reflected. "Demming," said he, gravely, "I will try to help you. You have no objection, I suppose, to our buying the coffin and other things needed. We will pay the bills."

Demming's dejected bearing grew a shade more sombre : he waved his hand, a gesture very common with him, and usually denoting affable approval ; now it meant gloomy assent. "No objection 't all, Bishop," he said. "I knows my weakness, though I don' feel now as ef I'd evah want ter go on no carousements no mo'. I'm 'bliged ter you uns jes' the same. An' you won't forget 'bout the cloze? I've been a right good frien' to th' Norf in Aiken, an' I hope the Norf 'll stan' by me in the hour o' trubbel. Now, Bishop, I'll be gwine 'long. You'll fin' me at the cyoffin sto'. Mose Barnwell—he's a mighty decent cullud man—lives nigh me ; he's gwine fur ter len' me his cyart ter tek the cyoffin home. Mahnin', Bishop, an' min', I don' want money outen *you*. No, sir, I do *not*!"

Then, having waved his hand at his hat, the cracker slouched away. The Bishop had a busy morning. He went from friend to friend, until the needed sum was collected. Nor did money satisfy him : he gathered together a suit of clothes from the tallest Northerners of benevolent impulses. Talboys was too short to be a donor of clothes, but he gave more money than all the others united,—a munificence that rebuked the

Bishop, for he had sought the young Boston man last of all and reluctantly ; somehow, he could not feel acquainted with him, notwithstanding many meetings in many places. Moreover, he held him in slight esteem, as an idle fellow who did little good with a great fortune. In his gratitude he became expansive : told Talboys about his acquaintance with the cracker, described his experiences and perplexities, and at last invited the young man to go to the funeral, the next day. Talboys was delighted to accept the invitation ; yet it could not be said that he was often delighted. But he admired the Bishop, and, even more warmly, he admired the Bishop's daughter ; hence he caught at any opportunity to show his friendliness. Martin Talboys was never enthusiastic, and at times his views of life might be called cynical ; but it would be a mistake to infer, therefore, that, as is common enough, he, having a mean opinion of other people, struck a balance with a very high one of himself. In truth, Martin was too modest for his own peace of mind. For years he had contrived to meet Louise, by accident, almost everywhere she went. She travelled a good deal, and her image was relieved against a variety of backgrounds. It seemed to him fairer in each new picture. His love for the Bishop's daughter grew more and more absorbing ; but at the same time he became less and less sanguine that she would ever care for him. Although he was not enthusiastic, he was quite capable of feeling deeply ; and

he had begun to suspect that he was capable of suffering. Yet he could not force himself to decide his fate by speaking. It was not that Louise disliked him ; on the contrary, she avowed a sincere liking ; she always hailed his coming with pleasure, telling him frankly that no one amused her as did he. There, alas ! was the hopeless part of it ; he used to say bitterly to himself that he wasn't a man, a lover, to her ; he was a mimic, a genteel clown, an errand boy, never out of temper with his work ; in short, she did not take him seriously at all. He knew the manner of man she did take seriously,—a man of action, who had done something in the world. Once she told Talboys that he was a "capital observer." She made the remark as a compliment, but it stung him to the quick ; he realized that she thought of him only as an observer. When a trifling but obstinate throat complaint brought the Bishop to Aiken, Talboys felt a great longing to win his approval. Surely, Louise, who judged all men by her father's standard, must be influenced by her father's favor. Unhappily, the Bishop had never, as the phrase goes, "taken " to Talboys, nor did he seem more inclined to take to him now, and Martin was too modest to persist in unwelcome attentions. But he greeted the present opportunity all the more warmly.

In the morning, the three—the Bishop, Louise, and Talboys—drove to the cracker's cabin. The day was perfect, one of those Aiken days, so fair

that even invalids find no complaint in their wearisome list to bring against them and can but sigh over each, "Ah, if all days might only be like this!" Hardly a cloud marred the tender blue of the sky. The air was divinely soft. They drove through the woods, and the ground was carpeted with dry pine spikes, whereon their horses' hoofs made a dull and pleasant sound. A multitude of violets grew in the little spaces among the trees. Yellow jasmine flecked the roadside shade with gold, its fragrance blending with the keen odors of the pine. If they looked up, they saw the pine tops etched upon the sky, and a solemn, ceaseless murmur beat its organ-like waves through all their talk. The Bishop had put on his clerical robes; he sat on the back seat of the carriage, a superb figure, with his noble head and imposing mien. As they rolled along, the Bishop talked. He spoke of death. He spoke not as a priest, but as a man, dwelling on the mystery of death, bringing up those speculations with which from the beginning men have striven to light the eternal darkness.

"I suppose it is the mystery," said the Bishop, "which causes the unreality of death, its perpetual surprise. Now, behind my certainty of this poor woman's death I have a lurking expectation of seeing her standing in the doorway, her old clay pipe in her mouth. I can't help it."

"Though she was a 'bawn lady,' she smoked, did she?" said Talboys. Then he felt the remark to be hopelessly below the level of the conversa-

tion, and made haste to add, "I suppose it was a consolation to her; she had a pretty hard life, I fancy."

"Awfully," said Louise. "She was nearly blind, poor woman, yet I think she did whatever work was done. I have often seen her hoeing. I believe that Demming was always good to her, though. He is a most amiable creature."

"Singular how a woman will bear any amount of laziness, actual worthlessness, indeed, in a man who is good to her," the Bishop remarked.

"Beautiful trait in her character," said Talboys. "Where should we be without it?"

"Have the Demmings never had any children?" asked Louise, who did not like the turn the talk was taking.

"Yes, one," the Bishop answered, "a little girl. She died three years ago. Demming was devotedly attached to her. He can't talk of her now without the tears coming to his eyes. He really," said the Bishop, meditatively, "seemed more affected when he told me about her death than he was yesterday. She died of some kind of low fever, and was ill a long time. He used to walk up and down the little path through the woods, holding her in his arms. She would wake up in the night and cry, and he would wrap her in an old army blanket, and pace in front of the house for hours. Often the teamsters driving into town at break of day, with their loads of wood, would come on him thus, walking and talking to the

child, with the little thin face on his shoulder, and the ragged blanket trailing on the ground. Ah, Demming is not altogether abandoned, he has an affectionate heart !”

Neither of his listeners made any response. Talboys, because of his slender faith in Demming ; Louise, because she was thinking that if the Aiken laundresses were intrusted with her father's lawn many more times there would be nothing left to darn. They went on silently, therefore, until the Bishop said, in a low voice, “ Here we are !”

The negro driver, with the agility of a country coachman, had already sprung to the ground, and was holding the carriage door open.

Before them lay a small cleared tract of land, where a pleasant greenness of young potato vines hid the sand. In the centre was a tumble-down cabin, with a mud chimney on the outside. The one window had no sash, and its rude shutter hung precariously by a single leathern hinge. The door was open, revealing that the interior was papered with newspapers. Three or four yelping curs seemed to be all the furniture.

There was nothing extraordinary in the picture ; one could see fifty such cabins, in a radius of half a mile. Nor was there anything of mark in the appearance of Demming himself, dressed exactly as he was the day before, and rubbing his eyes in the doorway. But behind him ! The coachman's under jaw dropped beneath the weight of a loud “ Fo' de Lawd !” The Bishop's benignant coun-

tenance was suddenly crimsoned. Talboys and Louise looked at each other, and bit their lips. It was only a woman,—a tall, thin, bent woman in a shabby print gown, with a faded sunbonnet pushed back from her gray head and a common clay pipe between her lips. Probably in her youth she had been a pretty woman, and the worn features and dim eyes still retained something engaging in their expression of timid good-will.

“ Won’ you all step in ? ” she said, advancing.

“ Yes, yes, ” added Demming, inclining his body and waving both hands with magnificent courtesy ; “ alight, gen’lemen, alight ! I’m sorry I ain’t no staggah juice to offah ye, but yo’ right welcome to sweet potatoes an’ pussimmon beah, w’ich ’s all— ”

“ Demming, ” said the Bishop, sternly, “ what does this mean ? I came to bury Mrs. Demming, and—and here she is ! ”

“ Burry me ! ” exclaimed the woman. “ Why, I ain’t dead ! ”

Demming rubbed his hands, his face wearing an indescribable expression of mingled embarrassment, contrition, and bland insinuation. “ Well, yes, Bishop, yere she is, an’ no mistake ! Nuthin’ more ’n a swond, you unnerstan’. I ’lowed ter notify you uns this mahnin’, but fac’ is I wuz so decomposed, fin’in’ her traipsin’ ’bout in the gyardin an’ you all ’xpectin’ a fun’al, thet I jes’ hed ter brace up ; an’ fac’ is I braced up too much, an’ ovahslep’. I’m powerful sorry, an’ I don’ blame you uns ef you *do* feel mad ! ”

The Bishop flung off his robes in haste and walked to the carriage, where he bundled them in with scant regard for their crispness.

"Never heard of such a thing!" said Louise, that being her invariable formula for occasions demanding expression before she was prepared to commit herself. By this time a glimmering notion of the state of things had reached the coachman's brain, and he was in an ecstasy. Talboys thought it fitting to speak. He turned to Mrs. Demming, who was looking from one to another of the group, in a scared way.

"Were you in a swoon?" he asked.

"Oh, laws!" cried the poor woman. "Oh, Demming, what *hev* you gwine an' done now? Gentlemen, he didn't mean no harm, I'm suah!"

"You were *not*, then?" said Talboys.

"Leave her 'lone, Cunnel," Demming said, quietly. "Don' yo' see she cyan't stan' no sech racket? 'Sence yo' so mighty peart 'bout it, no, she wahn't, an' thet thar's the truf. I jes' done it fur ter raise money. It wuz this a way. Thet thar mahin', w'ile I wuz a-considerin' an' a-contemplatin' right smart how I wuz evah to git a few dollars, I seen Mose Barnwell gwine 'long,—yo' know Mose Barnwell," turning in an affable, conversational way to the grinning negro,—"*an' he'd a string o' crape 'roun' his hat 'cause he'd jes done los' his wife, an' he wuz purportin' ter git a cyoffin. So I 'lowed I'd git a cyoffin fur him cheap. An' I reckon,*" said Demming, smiling

graciously on his delighted black auditor, — “ I reckon I done it.”

“ Demming,” cried the Bishop, with some heat, “ this exceeds patience—”

“ I know, Bishop,” answered the vagabond, meekly,—“ I know it. I wuz tempted an’ I fell, as you talked ’bout in yo’ sermon. It’s orful how I kin do sech things !”

“ And those chickens, too !” ejaculated the Bishop, with rising wrath, as new causes rushed to his remembrance. “ You stole chickens,—Judge Eldridge’s chickens ; you who pretend to be such a stanch friend of the North—”

“ Chickens !” screamed the woman. “ Oh, Lordy ! Oh, he nevah done thet afo’e ! He’ll be took to jail ! Oh, Demming, how cyould ye ? Stealin’ chickens, jes’ like a low-down, no-’cyount niggah !” Sobs choked her voice, and tears of fright and shame were streaming down her hollow cheeks.

Demming looked disconcerted. “ Now, look a yere !” said he, sinking his voice reproachfully ; “ w’at wuz the use o’ bringin’ thet thar up befo’ th’ ole ’ooman ? She don’ know nuthin’ on it, you unnerstan’, an’ why mus’ you rile ’er up fur ? I’d not a thought it o’ you, Bishop, thet I wyouldn’t. Now, Alwynda,” turning to the weeping woman, who was wiping her eyes with the cape of her sunbonnet, “ jes’ you dry up an’ stop yo’ bellerin’, an’ I ’splain it all in a holy minit. Thar, thar,” patting her on the shoulder, “ ’tain’t nuthin’ ter cry ’bout ; ’tain’t no fault o’ yourn,

onyhow. Fac' is, gen'lemen, 'twuz all 'long o' my 'preciation o' the Bishop. I'm a 'Piscopal, like yo'self, Bishop, an' I tole Samson Mobley thet you overlaid all the preachers yere fur goodness an' shortness bofe. An' he 'lowed, 'Mabbe he may fur goodness ; I ain't no jedge,' says he ; 'but fo' shortness, we've a feller down at the Baptis' kin beat 'im outen sight. They've jes' gin up sleepin' down thar,' says he, ''cause 'tain't worth w'ile.' So we tried it on, you unnerstan', 'cause thet riled me, an' I jes' bet on it, I did ; an' we tried it on,—you in the mahnin' and him in the arternoon. An' laws, ef didn't so happen as how you'd a powerful flow o' speech ! 'Twuz 'mazin' edifyin', but 't los' me the bet, you unnerstan' ; an' onct los' I hed ter pay ; an' not havin' ary chick o' my own I had ter confiscate some from th' ginerel public, an' I tuk 'em 'thout distinction o' party frum the handiest cyoop in the Baptis' dernomination. I kin' o' hankered arter Baptis' chickuns, somèhow, so's ter git even, like. Now, Bishop, I jes' leaves ter you uns, cyould I go back on a debt o' honah, like thet ?"

"Honor !" repeated the Bishop, scornfully.

Talboys interposed again : "We appear to be sold, Bishop ; don't you think we had better get out of this before the hearse comes ?"

Demming waved his hand at Talboys, saying in his smoothest tones, "Ef you meet it, Cunnel, p'raps you'd kin'ly tell 'em ter go on ter Mose Barnwell's. He's ready an' waitin.'"

"Demming—" began the Bishop, but he did not finish the sentence; instead, he lifted his hat to Mrs. Demming, with his habitual stately courtesy, and moved in a slow and dignified manner to the carriage. Louise followed, only stopping to say to the still weeping woman, "He is in no danger from us; but this trick was a poor return for my father's kindness."

Demming had been rubbing his right eyebrow obliquely with his hand, thus making a shield behind which he winked at the coachman in a friendly and humorous manner; at Louise's words, his hand fell and his face changed quickly. "Don' say thet, miss," he said, a ring of real emotion in his voice. "I know I'm purty po' pickin's, but I ain't ongrateful. Yo' par will remember I wyouldn't tek no money frum *him*!"

"I would have given fifty dollars," cried the Bishop, "rather than have had this—this scandalous fraud! Drive on!"

They drove away. The last they saw of Demming he was blandly waving his hand.

The drive back from the house so unexpectedly disclosed as not a house of mourning was somewhat silent. The Bishop was the first to speak. "I shall insist upon returning every cent of that money," he said.

"I assure you none of us will take it," Talboys answered; "and really, you know, the sell was quite worth the money."

"And you did see her, after all," said Louise,

dryly, "standing in the doorway, with her old clay pipe in her mouth."

The Bishop smiled, but he sighed, too. "Well, well, I ought not to have lost my temper. But I am disappointed in Demming. I thought I had won his affection, and I hoped through his affection to reach his conscience. I suppose I deceived myself."

"I fear he hasn't any conscience to reach," Louise observed.

"I agree with Miss Louise," said Talboys. "You see, Demming is a cracker."

"Ah! the cracker has his virtues," observed the Bishop; "not the cardinal New England virtues of thrift and cleanliness and energy; but he has his own. He is as hospitable as an Arab, brave, faithful, and honest, and full of generosity and kindness."

"All the same, he isn't half civilized," said Talboys, "and as ignorant morally as any being you can pick up. He doesn't steal or lie much, I grant you, but he smashes all the other commandments to flinders. He kills when he thinks he has been insulted, and he hasn't the feeblest scruples about changing his old wife for a new one whenever he feels like it, without any nonsense of divorce. The women are just as bad as the men. But Demming is not only a cracker; he is a cracker spoiled by the tourists. We have despoiled him of his simplicity. He hasn't learned any good of us,—that goes without saying,—but he has

learned no end of Yankee tricks. Do you suppose that if left to himself he would ever have been up to this morning's performance? Oh, we've polished his wicked wits for him! Even his dialect is no longer pure South Carolinian; it is corrupted by Northern slang. We have ruined his religious principles, too. The crackers haven't much of any morality, but they are very religious,—all Southerners are. But Demming is an unconscious Agnostic. 'I tell ye,' he says to the saloon theologians, 'thar ain't no tellin'. 'Ligion 's a heap like jumpin' arter a waggin in th' dark · yo' mo'n likely ter lan' on nuthin'!' And you have seen for yourselves that he has lost the cracker honesty."

"At least," said Louise, "he has the cracker hospitality left; he made us welcome to all he had."

"And did you notice," said the Bishop, who had quite smoothed his ruffled brow by this time,— "did you notice the consideration, tenderness almost, that he showed to his wife? Demming has his redeeming qualities, believe me, Mr. Talboys."

"I see that you don't mean to give him up," said Talboys, smiling; but he did not pursue the subject.

For several days Demming kept away from Aiken. When he did appear he rather avoided the Bishop. He bore the jokes and satirical congratulations of his companions with his usual equa-

nimity ; but he utterly declined to gratify public curiosity either at the saloon or the grocery. One morning he met the Bishop. They walked a long way together, and it was observed that they seemed to be on most cordial terms. This happened on Tuesday. Friday morning Demming came to the Bishop in high spirits. He showed a letter from a cousin in Charleston, a very old man, with no near kindred and a comfortable property. This cousin, repenting of an old injustice to Demming's mother, had bethought him of Demming, his nearest relative ; and sent for him, inclosing money to pay all expenses. " He is right feeble," said Demming, with a cheerful accent not according with his mournful words, " an' wants ter see me onct fo' he departs. Reckon he means ter do well by me."

The Bishop's hopeful soul saw a chance for the cracker's reclamation. So he spoke solemnly to him, warning him against perilling his future by relapsing into his old courses in Charleston. Nothing could exceed Demming's bland humility. He filled every available pause in the exhortation with " Thet's so," and " Shoo 's yo' bawn !" and answered, " I'm gwine ter be 's keerful 's a ole coon thet 's jes' got shet o' the dogs. You nevah said truer words than them thar, an' don' you forget it ! I'm gwine ter buy mo' lan', an' raise hogs, an' keep th' ole 'ooman like a lady. Don' ye be 'feard o' me gwine on no' mo' tears. No, sir, none o' thet in mine. 'Twuz on'y 'cause I wuz so low in my

min' I evah done it, onyhow. Now, I'm gwine ter be 's sober 's a owl!"

Notwithstanding these and similar protestations, hardly an hour was gone before Demming was the glory of the saloon, haranguing the crowd on his favorite topic, the Bishop's virtues. "High-toned gen'leman, bes' man in the worl', an' nobody's fool, either. I'm proud to call him my frien', an' Aiken's put in its bes' licks w'en it cured *him*. Gen'lemen, he 'vised me ter fight shy o' you all. I reckon as how I mought be better off ef I'd allus have follered his ammonitions. Walk up, gen'lemen, an' drink his health! My 'xpens'."

The sequel to such toasts may readily be imagined. By six o'clock, penniless and tipsy, Demming was apologizing to the Bishop on the hotel piazza. He had the grace to seem ashamed of himself. "Wust o' 't is flingin' away all thet money; but I felt kinder like makin' everybody feel good, an' I set 'em up. An' 't 'appened, somehow, they wuz a right smart chance o' people in, jes' thet thar minit,—they gen'rally *is* a right smart chance o' people in when a feller sets 'em up! an' they wuz powerful dry,—they gen'rally *is* dry, *then*; an' the long an' short o' 't is, they cleaned me out. An' now, Bishop, I jes' feel-nashuated with myself. Suah 's yo' bawn, Bishop, I'm gwine ter reform. 'Stop short, an' nevah go on again,' like thet thar clock in the song. I am, fur a fac', sir. I'm repentin' to a s'prisin' extent."

"I certainly should be surprised if you *were* repentant," the Bishop said, dryly ; then, after a pause, "Well, Demming, I will help you this once again. I will buy you a ticket to Charleston."

Some one had come up to the couple unperceived ; this person spoke quickly : "Please let me do that, Bishop. Demming has afforded me enough entertainment for that."

"You don' think no gre't shakes o' me, do you, Cunnel?" said Demming, looking at Talboys half humorously, yet with a shade of something else in his expression. "You poke fun at me all the time. Well, pleases you, an' don' hurt me, I reckon. Mahnin', Bishop ; mahnin', Cunnel. I'll be at th' deppo." He waved his hand and shambled away. Both men looked after him.

"I will see that he gets off," said Talboys. "I leave Aiken, myself, in the morning."

"Leave Aiken?" the Bishop repeated. "But you will return?"

"I don't expect to."

"Why, I am sorry to hear that, Mr. Talboys,—truly sorry." The Bishop took the young man's hand and pressed it. "I am just beginning to know you ; I may say, to like you, if you will permit the expression. Won't you walk in with me now, and say good-by to my daughter?"

"Thanks, very much, but I have already made my adieux to Miss Louise."

"Ah, yes, certainly," said the Bishop, absently. He was an absorbed clergyman ; but he had

sharp enough eyes, did he choose to use them ; and Talboys' reddening cheeks told him a great deal. It cannot be said that he was sorry because his daughter had not looked kindly on this worldly and cynical young man's affection ; but he was certainly sorry for the young man himself, and his parting grasp of the hand was warmer than it would have been but for that fleeting blush.

"Poor fellow, poor fellow !" soliloquized the Bishop, when, after a few cordial words, they had parted. "He looks as though it had hurt him. I suppose that is the way we all take it. Well, time cures us ; but it would scarcely do to tell him that, or how much harder it is to win a woman, find how precious she is, and then to lose her. Ah, well, time helps even that ! 'For the strong years conquer us.' "

But he sighed as he went back to his daughter, and he did not see the beautiful Miss Reynolds when she bowed to him, although she was smiling her sweetest and brightest smile.

Louise sat in her room. Its windows opened upon the piazza, and she had witnessed the interview. She did not waver in her conviction that she had done right. She could not wisely marry a man whom she did not respect, let his charm of manner and temper be what it might. She needed a man who was manly, who could rule other men ; besides, how could she make up her mind to walk through life with a husband hardly above her shoulder ? Still, she conceded to herself that, had

Talboys compelled one thrill of admiration from her by any mental or moral height, she would not have caviled at his short stature. But there was something ridiculous in the idea of Talboys thrilling anybody. For one thing, he took everything too lightly. Suddenly, with the sharpness of a new sensation, she remembered that he had not seemed to take the morning's episode lightly. Poor Martin !—for the first time, even in her reveries, she called him by his Christian name,—there was an uncomfortable deal of feeling in his few words. Yet he was considerate ; he made it as easy as possible for her.

Martin was always considerate ; he never jarred on her ; possibly, the master mind might jar, being so masterful. He was always kind, too ; continually scattering pleasures about in his quiet fashion. Such a quiet fashion it was that few people noticed how persistent was the kindness. Now a hundred instances rushed to her mind. All at once, recalling something, she blushed hotly. That morning, just as Talboys and she were turning from the place where he had asked and she had answered, she caught a glimpse of Demming's head through the leaves. He had turned, also, and he made a feint of passing them, as though he were but that instant walking by. The action had a touch of delicacy it it ; a Northerner of Demming's class would not have shown it. Louise felt grateful to the vagabond ; at the same time, it was hardly pleasant to know that he was as wise

as she in Talboys's heart affairs. As for Talboys himself, he had not so much as seen Demming ; he had been too much occupied with his own bitter thoughts. Again Louise murmured, " Poor Martin ! " What was the need, though, that her own heart should be like lead ? Almost impatiently, she rose and sought her father.

The Bishop, after deliberation, had decided to accompany Demming to Charleston. He excused his interest in the man so elaborately and plausibly that his daughter was reminded of Talboys.

Saturday morning all three—the Bishop, the vagabond, and Talboys—started for Charleston. Talboys, however, did not know that the Bishop was going. He bought Demming's ticket, saw him safely to a seat, and went into the smoking-car. The Bishop was late, but the conductor, with true Southern good-nature, backed the train and took him aboard. He seated himself in front of Demming, and began to wipe his heated brow.

" Why do they want to have a fire in the stove this weather ? " said he.

" Well, " said the cracker, slyly, " you see we hain't all been runnin', an' we're kinder chilly ! "

" Humph ! " said the Bishop. After this there was silence. The train rolled along ; through the pine woods, past small stations where rose trees brightened trim white cottages, then into the swamp lands, where the moisture painted the bark of tall trees, and lay in shiny green patches among them. The Southern moss dripping from the giant

branches shrouded them in a weird drapery, soft as mist. There was something dreary and painful to a Northern eye in the scene; the tall and shrouded trees, the stagnant pools of water gleaming among them, the vivid green patches of moss, the barren stretches of sand. The very beauty in it all seemed the unnatural glory of decay, repelling the beholder. Here and there were cabins. One could not look at them without wondering whether the inhabitants had the ague, or its South Carolina synonym, the "break-bone fever." At one, a bent old woman was washing. She lifted her head, and Demming waved his hat at her. Then he glanced at the Bishop, now busy with a paper, and chuckled over some recollection. He looked out again. There was a man running along the side of the road waving a red flag. He called out a few words, which the wind of the train tore to pieces. At the same instant, the whistle of the engine began a shrill outcry. "Sunthin' 's bust, I reckon," said Demming. And then, before he could see, or know, or understand, a tremendous crash drowned his senses, and in one awful moment blended shivering glass and surging roof and white faces like a horrible kaleidoscope.

The first thing he noticed, when he came to himself, was a thin ribbon of smoke. He watched it lazily, while it melted into the blue sky, and another ribbon took its place. But presently the pain in his leg aroused him. He perceived that the car was lying on one side, making the other

side into a roof, and one open window was opposite his eyes. At the other end the car was hardly more than a mass of broken seats and crushed sides, but it was almost intact where he lay. He saw that the stove had charred the wood-work near it; hence the smoke, which escaped through a crack and floated above him. The few people in the car were climbing out of the windows as best they might. A pair of grimy arms reached down to Demming, and he heard the brakeman's voice (he knew Jim Herndon, the brakeman, well) shouting profanely for the "next."

"Whar's the Bishop?" said Demming.

"Reckon he's out," answered Jim. "Mought as well come yo'self! H——! you've broke yo' leg!"

"Pull away, jes' the same. I don' wanter stay yere an' roast!"

The brakeman pulled him through the window. Demming shut his teeth hard; only the fear of death could have made him bear the agony every motion gave him.

The brakeman drew him to one side before he left him. Demming could see the wreck plainly. A freight train had been thrown from the track, and the passenger train had run into it while going at full speed. "The brakes wouldn't work," Demming heard Jim say. Now the sight was a sorry one: a heap of rubbish which had been a freight car; the passenger engine sprawling on one side, in the swamp, like a huge black beetle;

and, near it, the two foremost cars of its train overturned and shattered. The people of both trains were gathered about the wreck, helplessly talking, as is the manner of people in an accident. They were, most of them, on the other side of the track. No one had been killed ; but some were wounded, and were stretched in a ghastly row on car cushions. The few women and children in the train were collected about the wounded.

“ Is the last man out ? ” shouted the conductor.

Jim answered, “ Yes, all out—no, d—— it ! I see a coat-tail down here.”

“ Look at the fire ! ” screamed a woman. “ Oh, God help him ! The car’s afire ! ”

“ He’s gone up, whoever he is,” muttered Jim. “ They ain’t an axe nor nuthin’ on board, an’ he ’s wedged in fast. But come on, boys ! I’ll drop in onct mo’ ! ”

“ You go with him,” another man said. “ Here, you fellows, I can run fastest ; I’ll go to the cabin for an axe. Some of you follow me for some water ! ”

Demming saw the speaker for an instant,—an erect little figure in a foppish gray suit, with a “ cat’s eye ” gleaming from his blue cravat. One instant he stood on the piece of timber upon which he had jumped ; the next he had flung off his coat, and was speeding down the road like a hare.

“ D—— ef ’t ain’t the Cunnel,” said Demming.

“ Come on ! ” shouted Talboys, never slackening his speed. “ Hurry ! ”

The men went. Demming, weak with pain, was content to look across the gap between the trains and watch those left behind. The smoke was growing denser now, and tongues of flame shot out between the joints of wood. They said the man was at the other end. Happily, the wind blew the fire from him. Jim and two other men climbed in again. Demming could hear them swearing and shouting. He looked anxiously about, seeking a familiar figure which he could not find. He thought it the voice of his own fears, that cry from within the car. "Good God, it's the Bishop!" But immediately Jim thrust his head out of the window, and called, "The Bishop's in hyar! Under the cyar seats! He ain't hurt, but we cyant move the infernal things ter get him out!"

"Oh, Lordy!" groaned the vagabond; "an' I'm so broke up I cyant lif' a han' ter help him!"

In desperation, the men outside tried to batter down the car walls with a broken tree limb. Inside, they strained feverishly at the heavy timbers. Vain efforts all, at which the crackling flames, crawling always nearer, seemed to mock.

Demming could hear the talk, the pitying comments, the praise of the Bishop: "Such a good man!" "His poor daughter, the only child, and her mother dead!" "They were so fond of each other, poor thing, poor thing!" And a soft voice added, "Let us pray!"

"Prayin'," muttered Demming, "jes' like wim-

men ! Laws, they don' know no better. How'll I git ter him ?"

He began to crawl to the car, dragging his shattered leg behind him, reckless of the throbs of pain it sent through his nerves. " Ef I kin on'y stan' it till I git ter him !" he moaned. " Burnin' alive's harder nor this." He felt the hot smoke on his face ; he heard the snapping and roaring of the fire ; he saw the men about the car pull out Jim and his companions, and perceived that their faces were blackened.

" It 'll cotch me, suah 's death !" said Demming, between his teeth. " Well, 'tain't much mattah !" Mustering all his strength he pulled himself up to the car window below that from which Jim had just emerged. The crowd, occupied with the helpless rescuers, had not observed him before. They shouted at him as one man : " Get down, it's too late !" " You're crazy, you ——!" yelled Jim, with an oath.

" Never you min'," Demming answered, coolly. " I know what I'm 'bout, I reckon."

He had taken his revolver from his breast, and was searching through his pockets. He soon pulled out what he sought, merely a piece of stout twine ; and the crowd saw him, sitting astride the trucks, while he tied the string about the handle of the weapon. Then he leaned over the prison walls, and looked down upon the Bishop. Under the mass of wood and iron the Bishop lay, unhurt but securely imprisoned ; yet he had never advanced

to the chancel rails with a calmer face than that he lifted to his friend.

"Demming," he cried, "you here! Go back, I implore you! You can't save me."

"I know thet, Bishop," groaned the cracker. "I ain't tryin' ter. But I cyan't let you roast in this yere d—— barbecue! Look a yere!" He lowered the revolver through the window. "Thar's a pistil, an' w'en th' fire cotches onter you an' yo' gwine suah 's shootin', then put it ter yo' head an' pull the trigger, an' yo'll be outen it all!"

The Bishop's firm pale face grew paler as he answered, "Don't tempt me, Demming! Whatever God sends I must bear. I can't do it!" Demming paused. He looked steadily at the Bishop for a second; then he raised the revolver, with a little quiver of his mouth. "And go away, for God's sake, my poor friend! Bear my love to my dear, dear daughter; tell her that she has always been a blessing and a joy to me. And remember what I have said to you, yourself. It will be worth dying for if you will do that; it will, indeed. It is only a short pain, and then heaven! Now go, Demming. God bless and keep you. Go!"

But Demming did not move. "Don' you want ter say a prayer, Bishop?" he said in a coaxing tone,—"jes' a little mite o' one fur you an' me? Ye don' need ter min' 'bout sayin' 't loud. I'll unnerstan' th' intention, an' feel jes' so edified. I will, fur a fac'."

"Go, first, Demming. I am afraid for you!"

"I'm a-gwine, Bishop," said Demming, in the same soft, coaxing tone. "Don' min' *me*. I'm all right." He crouched down lower, so that the Bishop could not see him, and the group below saw him rest the muzzle of the pistol on the window-sill and take aim.

A gasp ran through the crowd,—that catching of the breath in which overtaxed feeling relieves itself. "He's doin' the las' kindness he can to him," said the brakeman to the conductor, "and by the Lord, he's giv' his own life to do it!"

The flames had pierced the roof, and streamed up to the sky. Through the sickening, dull roar they heard the Bishop's voice again :

"Demming, are you gone?"

The cracker struck a loose piece of wood, and sent it clattering down. "Yes, Bishop, that wuz me. I'm safe on th' groun'. Good-by, Bishop. I do feel 'bleeged ter you; an', Bishop, them chickens *wuz* the fust time. They wuz, on my honah. Now, Bishop, shet yo' eyes an' pray, fur it's a-comin'!"

The Bishop prayed. They could not hear what he said, below. No one heard save the uncouth being who clung to the window, revolver in hand, steadily dying the creeping red death. But they knew that, out of sight, a man who had smiled on them, full of life and hope, but an hour ago was facing such torture as had tried the martyr's courage, and facing it with as high a faith.

With one accord men and women bent their heads. Jim, the brakeman, alone remained standing, his form erect, his eyes fixed on the two iron lines that made an angle away in the horizon. "Come on !" he yelled, leaping wildly into the air. "Fo' the Lord's sake, hurry ! D—— him, but he's the bulliest runner!"

Then they all saw a man flying down the track, axe in hand. He ran up to the car side. He began to climp. A dozen hands caught him. "You're a dead man if you get in there !" was the cry. "Don't you see it's all afire ?"

"Try it from the outside, Colonel !" said the conductor.

"Don't you see I haven't time ?" cried Talboys. "He'll be dead before we can get to him. Stand back, my men, and, Jim, be ready to pull us both out !"

The steady tones and Talboys's business-like air had an instantaneous effect. The crowd were willing enough to be led ; they fell back, and Talboys dropped through the window. To those outside the whole car seemed in a blaze, and over them the smoke hung like a pall ; but through the crackling and roaring and the crash of falling timber came the clear ring of axe blows, and Talboys' voice shouting, "I say, my man, don't lose heart ! We're bound to get you out !"

"Lordy, he don't know who 'tis," said Demming. "Nobody could see through that thar smoke !"

All at once the uninjured side of the car gave way beneath the flames, falling in with an immense crash. The flame leaped into the air.

"They're gone!" cried the conductor.

"No, they're not!" yelled Demming. "He's got him, safe an' soun'!" And as he spoke, scorched and covered with dust, bleeding from a cut on his cheek, but holding the Bishop in his arms, Talboys appeared at the window. Jim snatched the Bishop, the conductor helped out Talboys, and half a dozen hands laid hold of Demming. He heard the wild cheer that greeted them; he heard another cheer for the men with the water, just in sight; but he heard no more, for as they pulled him down a dozen fiery pincers seemed tearing at his leg, and he fainted away.

* * * * *

The Bishop's daughter sat in her room, making a very pretty picture, with her white hands clasped on her knee and her soft eyes uplifted. She looked sad enough to please a pre-Raphaelite of sentiment. Yet her father, whom this morning she would have declared she loved better than any one in the world, had just been saved from a frightful death. She knew the story of his deliverance. At last she felt that most unexpected thrill of admiration for Talboys; but Talboys had vanished. He was gone, it was all ended, and she owned to herself that she was wretched. Her father was with Demming and the doctors. The poor vagabond must hobble through life on one leg, henceforward.

"If he lived," the doctor had said, making even his existence as a cripple problematic. Poor Demming, who had flung away his life to save her father from suffering,—a needless, useless sacrifice, as it proved, but touching Louise the more because of its very failure !

At this stage in her thoughts, she heard Sam, the waiter, knocking softly, outside. Her first question was about Demming. "The operation's ovah, miss, an' Mr. Demming he's sinkin'," answered Sam, giving the sick man a title he had never accorded him before, "an' he axes if you'd be so kin' 's to step in an' speak to him ; he's powerful anxious to see you."

Silently Louise rose and followed the mulatto. They had carried Demming to the hotel ; it was the nearest place, and the Bishop wished it. His wife had been sent for, and was with him. Her timid, tear-stained face was the first object that met Louise's eye. She sat in a rocking-chair close to the bed, and, by sheer force of habit, was unconsciously rocking to and fro, while she brushed the tears from her eyes. Demming's white face and tangle of iron-gray hair lay on the pillow near her.

He smiled feebly, seeing Louise. She did not know anything better to do than to take his hand, the tears brightening her soft eyes. "Laws," said Demming, "don' do thet. I ain't wuth it. Look a yere, I got sun'thin' ter say ter you. An' you mustn't min', 'cause I mean well. You know 'bout—yes'day mahnin'. Mabbe you done what

you done not knowin' yo' own min',—laws, thet's jes' girls,—an' I wants you ter know jes' what kin' o' feller he is. You know he saved yo' pa, but you don' know, mabbe, thet he didn't know 'twas the Bishop till he'd jump down in thet thar flamin' pit o' hell, as 'twere, an' fished him out. He done it jes' 'cause he'd thet pluck in him, an'—don' you go fer ter chippin' in, Cunnel. I'm a dyin' man, an' don' you forget it! Thar he is, miss, hidin' like behin' the bed."

Louise during this speech had grown red to the roots of her hair. She looked up into Talboys's face. He had stepped forward. His usual composure had quite left him, so that he made a pitiful picture of embarrassment, not helped by crumpled linen and a borrowed coat a world too large for him. "It 's just a whim of his," he whispered, hurriedly; "he wanted me to stay. I didn't know—I didn't understand! For God's sake, don't suppose I meant to take such an advantage of the situation! I am going directly. I shall leave Aiken to-night."

It was only the strain on her nerves, but Louise felt the oddest desire to laugh. The elegant Martin cut such a very droll figure as a hero. Then her eye fell on Demming's eager face, and a sudden revulsion of feeling, a sudden keen realization of the tragedy that Martin had averted, brought the tears back to her eyes. Her beautiful head dropped. "Why do you go—now?" said she.

"Hev you uns made it up, yet?" murmured Demming's faint voice.

"Yes," Talboys answered, "I think we have, and—I thank you, Demming." The vagabond waved his hand with a feeble assumption of his familiar gesture. "Yo' a square man, Cunnel. I allus set a heap by you, though I didn't let on. An' she's a right peart young lady. I'm glad yo' gwine ter be so happy. Laws, I kind o' wish I wuz to see it, even on a wooden leg—" The woman at his side began to sob. "Thar, thar, Alwynda, don' take on so; cyan't be helped. You mus' 'scuse her, gen'lemen; she so petted on me she jes' cyan't hole in!"

"Demming," said the Bishop, "my poor friend, the time is short; is there anything you want me to do?" Demming's dull eyes sparkled with a glimmer of the old humor.

"Well, Bishop, ef you don' min', I'd like you ter conduc' the fun'al services. Reckon they'll be a genuwide co'pse this yere time, fo' suah. An', Bishop, you'll kind o' look arter Alwynda; see she gits her cyoffee an' terbacco all right. An' I wants ter 'sure you all again thet them thar chickens wuz the fust an' on'y thing I evah laid han's on t' want mine. Thet's the solemn truf; ain't it, Alwynda?"

The poor woman could only rock herself in the chair, and sob, "Yes, 'tis. An', he's been a good husband to me. I've allus hed the bes' uv everything! Oh, Lordy, 'pears 's though I cyan't bear it, nohow!"

Louise put her hand gently on the thin shoulder, saying, "I will see that she never wants anything we can give, Demming ; and we will try to comfort her."

The cracker looked wistfully from her fresh, young face to the worn face below. "She wuz 's peart an' purty 's you, miss, w'en I fust struck up with 'er," said he, slowly. "Our little gal wuz her very image. Alwynda," in a singularly soft, almost diffident tone, "don' take on so ; mabbe I'm gwine fer ter see 'er again. 'Twon't do no harm ter think so, onyhow," he added, with a glance at Talboys, as though sure there of comprehension.

Then the Bishop spoke, solemnly, though with sympathy, urging the dying man, whose worldly affairs were settled, to repent of his sins and prepare for eternity. "Shall I pray for you, Demming?" he said, in conclusion.

"Jes' as you please, Bishop," answered Demming, and he tried to wave his hand. "I ain't noways partickler. I reckon God a'mighty knows I'd be th' same ole Demming ef I could get up, an' I don' mean ter make no purtenses. But mabbe it'll cheer up th' ole 'ooman a bit. So you begin, an' I'll bring in an Amen whenever it's wanted !"

So speaking, Demming closed his eyes wearily, and the Bishop knelt by the bedside. Talboys and Louise left them, thus. After a while, the wife stretched forth her toil-worn hand and took her

husband's. She thought she was aware of a weak pressure. But when the prayer ended there came no Amen. Demming was gone where prayer may only faintly follow ; nor could the Bishop ever decide how far his vagabond had joined in his petitions. Such doubts, however, did not prevent his cherishing an assured hope that the man who died for him was safe, forever. The Bishop's theology, like that of most of us, yielded, sometimes, to the demands of the occasion.

LOST.

BY EDWARD BELLAMY.

THE 25th of May, 1866, was no doubt to many a quite indifferent date, but to two persons it was the saddest day of their lives. Charles Randall that day left Bonn, Germany, to catch the steamer home to America, and Ida Werner was left with a mountain of grief on her gentle bosom, which must be melted away drop by drop, in tears, before she could breathe freely again.

A year before, Randall, hunting for apartments, his last term at the university just begun, had seen the announcement, "*Zimmer zu vermiiethen*," in the hall below the flat where the Werners lived. Ida answered his ring, for her father was still at his government office, and her mother had gone out to the market to buy the supper. She would much rather her mother had been at home to show the gentleman the rooms; but knowing that they

could not afford to lose a chance to rent them, she plucked up courage, and, candle in hand, showed him through the suite. When he came next day with his baggage he learned for the first time what manner of apartments he had engaged ; for although he had protracted the investigation the previous evening to the furthest corner, and had been most exacting as to explanations, he had really rented the rooms entirely on account of a certain light in which a set of Madonna features, in auburn hair, had shown at the first opening of the door.

A year had passed since this, and a week ago a letter from home had stated that his father, indignant at his unexplained stay six months beyond the end of his course, had sent him one last remittance, barely sufficient for a steamer ticket, with the intimation that if he did not return on a set day he must thenceforth attend to his own exchequer. The 25th was the last day on which he could leave Bonn to catch the requisite steamer. Had it been in November, nature at least would have sympathized ; it was cruel that their autumn time of separation should fall in the spring, when the sky is full of bounteous promise and the earth of blissful trust.

Love is so improvident that a parting a year away is no more feared than death, and a month's end seems dim and distant. But a week—a week only—that even to love is short, and the beginning of the end. The chilling mist that rose from the

gulf of separation so near before them, overshadowed all the brief remnant of their path. They were constantly together. But a silence had come upon them. Never had words seemed idler, they had so much to say. They could say nothing that did not mock the weight on their hearts, and seem trivial and impertinent because it was exclusive of more important matter. The utmost they could do was to lay their hearts open toward each other to receive every least impression of voice, and look, and manner, to be remembered afterward. At evening they went into the minster church, and sitting in the shadows listened to the sweet shrill choir of boys whose music distilled the honey of sorrow, and as the deep bass organ chords gripped their hearts with the tones that underlie all weal and woe, they looked in each other's eyes and did for a space feel so near that all the separation that could come after seemed but a trifling thing.

It was all arranged between them. He was to earn money, or get a position in business, and return in a year or two at most and bring her to America.

"Oh," she said once, "if I could but sleep till thou comest again to wake me, how blessed I should be; but, alas, I must wake all through the desolate time!"

Although for the most part she comforted him rather than he her, yet at times she gave way, and once suddenly turned to him and hid her face

on his breast, and said, trembling with tearless sobs :

“I know I shall never see thee more, Karl. Thou wilt forget me in thy great far land and wilt love another. My heart tells me so.”

And then she raised her head and her streaming eyes blazed with anger.

“I will hover about thee, and if thou lovest another I will kill her as she sleeps by thy side.”

And the woman must have loved him much, who, after seeing that look of hers, would have married him. But a moment after she was listening with abject ear to his promises.

The day came at last. He was to leave at three o'clock. After the noontide meal Ida's mother sat with them and they talked a little about America, Frau Werner exerting herself to give a cheerful tone to the conversation, and Randall answering her questions absently and without taking his eyes off Ida, who felt herself beginning to be seized with a nervous trembling. At last Frau Werner rose and silently left the room, looking back at them as she closed the door with eyes full of tears. Then as if by a common impulse they rose and put their arms about each other's necks, and their lips met in a long shuddering kiss. The breath came quicker and quicker ; sobs broke the kisses ; tears poured down and made them salt and bitter as parting kisses should be in which sweetness is mockery. Hitherto they had controlled their feelings, or rather she had controlled him ; but it was

no use any longer, for the time had come, and they abandoned themselves to the terrible voluptuousness of unrestrained grief, in which there is a strange meaningless suggestion of power, as though it might possibly be a force that could affect or remove its own cause if but wild and strong enough.

“Herr Randall, the carriage waits and you will lose the train,” said Frau Werner from the door, in a husky voice.

“I will not go, by God!” he swore, as he felt her clasp convulsively strengthen at the summons. The lesser must yield to the greater, and no loss or gain on earth was worth the grief upon her face. His father might disinherit him; America might sink, but she must smile again. And she did—brave, true girl and lover. The devotion his resolute words proved was like a strong nervine to restore her self-control. She smiled as well as her trembling lips would let her, and said, as she loosed him from her arms:

“No, thou must go, Karl. But thou wilt return, *nicht wahr?*”

I would not venture to say how many times he rushed to the door, and glancing back at her as she stood there desolate, followed his glance once more to her side. Finally, Frau Werner led him as one dazed to the carriage, and the impatient driver drove off at full speed.

It is seven years later, and Randall is pacing the deck of an ocean steamer, outward bound from

New York. It is the evening of the first day out. Here and there passengers are leaning over the bulwarks pensively regarding the sinking sun as it sets for the first time between them and their native land, or may be taking in with awed faces the wonder of the deep, which has haunted their imaginations from childhood. Others are already busily striking up acquaintances with fellow-passengers, and a bridal pair over yonder sit thrilling with the sense of isolation from the world that so emphasizes their mutual dependence and all-importance to each other. And other groups are talking business and referring to money and markets in New York, London, and Frankfort as glibly as if they were on land, much to the secret shock of certain raw tourists, who marvel at the insensitiveness of men who, thus speeding between two worlds, and freshly in the presence of the most august and awful form of nature, can keep their minds so steadily fixed upon cash-books and ledgers.

But Randall, as, with the habit of an old voyager, he already falls to pacing the deck, is too much engrossed with his own thoughts to pay much heed to these things. Only, as he passes a group of Germans, and the familiar accents of the sweet, homely tongue fall on his ear, he pauses, and lingers near.

The darkness gathers, the breeze freshens, the waves come tumbling out of the east, and the motion of the ship increases as she rears upward to

meet them. The groups on deck are thinning out fast as the passengers go below to enjoy the fearsome novelty of the first night at sea, and to compose themselves to sleep as it were in the hollow of God's hand. But long into the night Randall's cigar still marks his pacing up and down as he ponders, with alternations of tender, hopeful glow and sad foreboding the chances of his quest. Will he find her?

It is necessary to go back a little. When Randall reached America on his return from Germany, he immediately began to sow his wild oats, and gave his whole mind to it. Answering Ida's letters got to be a bore, and he gradually ceased doing it. Then came a few sad reproaches from her, and their correspondence ceased. Meanwhile, having had his youthful fling, he settled down as a steady young man of business. One day he was surprised to observe that he had of late insensibly fallen into the habit of thinking a good deal in a pensive sort of way about Ida and those German days. The notion occurred to him that he would hunt up her picture, which he hadn't thought of in five years. With misty eyes and crowding memories he pored over it, and a wave of regretful, yearning tenderness filled his breast.

Late one night after long search he found among his papers a bundle of her old letters already growing yellow. Being exceedingly rusty in his German, he had to study them out word by word. That night, till the sky grew gray in the

east, he sat there turning the pages of the dictionary with wet eyes and glowing face, and selecting definitions by the test of the heart. He found that some of these letters he had never before taken the pains to read through. In the bitterness of his indignation he cursed the fool who had thrown away a love so loyal and priceless.

All this time he had been thinking of Ida as if dead, so far off in another world did those days seem. It was with extraordinary effect that the idea finally flashed upon him that she was probably alive and now in the prime of her beauty. After a period of feverish and impassioned excitement he wrote a letter full of wild regret and beseeching, and an ineffable tenderness. Then he waited. After a long time it came back from the German dead-letter office. There was no person of the name at the address. She had left Bonn, then. Hastily setting his affairs in order, he sailed for Germany on the next steamer.

The incidents of the voyage were a blank in his mind. On reaching Bonn he went straight from the station to the old house in — strasse. As he turned into it from the scarcely less familiar streets leading thither, and noted each accustomed landmark, he seemed to have just returned to tea from an afternoon lecture at the university. In every feature of the street some memory lurked, and as he passed threw out delaying tendrils, clutching at his heart. Rudely he broke away, hastening on to that house near the end of the street, in each of

whose quaint windows fancy framed the longed-for face. She was not there, he knew, but for a while he stood on the other side of the street, unmindful of the stares and jostling of the passers-by, gazing at the house-front, and letting himself imagine from moment to moment that her figure might flit across some window, or issue from the door, basket in hand, for the evening marketing, on which journey he had so often accompanied her. At length, crossing the street, he inquired for the Werner family. The present tenants had never heard the name. Perhaps the tenants from whom they had received the house might be better informed. Where were they? They had moved to Cologne. He next went to the Bonn police-office, and from the records kept there, in which pretty much everything about every citizen is set down, ascertained that several years previous Herr Werner had died of apoplexy, and that no one of the name was now resident in the city. Next day he went to Cologne, hunted up the former tenants of the house, and found that they remembered quite distinctly the Werner family, and the death of the father, and only bread-winner. It had left the mother and daughter quite without resources, as Randall had known must probably have been the case. His informants had heard that they had gone to Düsseldorf.

His search had become a fever. After waiting seven years, a delay of ten minutes was unendurable. The trains seemed to creep. And yet, on

reaching Düsseldorf, he did not at once go about his search, but said to himself :

“ Let me not risk the killing of my last hope till I have warmed myself with it one more night, for to-morrow there may be no more warmth in it.”

He went to a hotel, ordered a room and a bottle of wine, and sat over it all night, indulging the belief that he would find her the next day. He denied his imagination nothing, but conjured up before his mind's eye the lovely vision of her fairest hour, complete even to the turn of the neck, the ribbon in the hair, and the light in the blue eyes. So he would turn into the street. Yes, here was the number. Then he rings the bell. She comes to the door. She regards him a moment indifferently. Then amazed recognition, love, happiness, transfigure her face. “ Ida !” “ Karl !” and he clasps her sobbing to his bosom, from which she shall never be sundered again.

The result of his search next day was the discovery that mother and daughter had been at Düsseldorf until about four years previous, where the mother had died of consumption, and the daughter had removed, leaving no address. The lodgings occupied by them were of a wretched character, showing that their circumstances must have been very much reduced.

There was now no further clew to guide his search. It was destined that the last he was to know of her should be that she was thrown on the tender mercies of the world—her last friend gone,

her last penny expended. She was buried out of his sight, not in the peaceful grave, with its tender associations, but buried alive in the living world ; hopelessly hid in the huge, writhing confusion of humanity. He lingered in the folly of despair about those sordid lodgings in Düsseldorf as one might circle vainly about the spot in the ocean where some pearl of great price had fallen overboard.

After a while he roused again, and began putting advertisements for Ida in the principal newspapers of Germany, and making random visits to towns all about to consult directories and police records. A singular sort of misanthropy possessed him. He cursed the multitude of towns and villages that reduced the chances in his favor to so small a thing. He cursed the teeming throngs of men, women, and children, in whose mass she was lost, as a jewel in a mountain of rubbish. Had he possessed the power, he would in those days, without an instant's hesitation, have swept the bewildering, obstructing millions of Germany out of existence, as the miner washes away the earth to bring to light the grain of gold in his pan. He must have scanned a million women's faces in that weary search, and the bitterness of that million-fold disappointment left its trace in a feeling of aversion for the feminine countenance and figure that he was long in overcoming.

Knowing that only by some desperate chance he could hope to meet her in his random wanderings,

it seemed to him that he was more likely to be successful by resigning as far as possible all volition, and leaving the guidance of the search to chance ; as if fortune were best disposed toward those who most entirely abdicated intelligence and trusted themselves to her. He sacredly followed every impulse, never making up his mind an hour before at what station he should leave the cars, and turning to the right or left in his wanderings through the streets of cities, as much as possible without intellectual choice. Sometimes, waking suddenly in the middle of the night, he would rise, dress with eager haste, and sally out to wander through the dark streets, thinking he might be led of Providence to meet her. And once out, nothing but utter exhaustion could drive him back ; for, how could he tell but in the moment after he had gone she might pass. He had recourse to every superstition of sortilege, clairvoyance, presentiment, and dreams. And all the time his desperation was singularly akin to hope. He dared revile no seeming failure, not knowing but just that was the necessary link in the chain of accidents destined to bring him face to face with her. The darkest hour might usher in the sunburst. The possibility that this was at last the blessed chance lit up his eyes ten thousand times as they fell on some new face.

But at last he found himself back in Bonn, with the feverish infatuation of the gambler which had succeeded hope in his mind, succeeded in turn by utter despair ! His sole occupation now was re-

visiting the spots which he had frequented with her in that happy year. As one who has lost a princely fortune sits down at length to enumerate the little items of property that happen to be attached to his person, disregarded before but now his all, so Randall counted up like a miser the little store of memories that were thenceforth to be his all. Wonderfully the smallest details of those days came back to him. The very seats they sat in at public places, the shops they entered together, their promenades and the pausing-places on them, revived in memory under a concentrated inward gaze like invisible paintings brought over heat.

One afternoon, after wandering about the city for some hours, he turned into a park to rest. As he approached his usual bench, sacred to him because Ida and he in the old days had often sat there, he was annoyed to see it already occupied by a pleasant-faced, matronly looking German woman, who was complacently listening to the chatter of a couple of small children. Randall threw himself upon the unoccupied end of the bench, rather hoping that his gloomy and preoccupied air might cause them to depart and leave him to his melancholy revery. And, indeed, it was not long before the children stopped their play and gathered timidly about their mother, and soon after the bench tilted slightly as she relieved it of her substantial charms, saying in a cheery, pleasant voice :

"Come, little ones, the father will be at home before us."

It was a secluded part of the garden, and the plentiful color left her cheeks as the odd gentleman at the other end of the bench turned with a great start at the sound of her voice, and transfixed her with a questioning look. But in a moment he said :

"Pardon me, madam, a thousand times. The sound of your voice so reminded me of a friend I have lost, that I looked up involuntarily."

The woman responded with good-natured assurances that he had not at all alarmed her. Meanwhile, Randall had an opportunity to notice that in spite of the thick-waisted and generally matronly figure, there were, now he came to look closely, several rather marked resemblances to Ida. The eyes were of the same blue tint, though about half as large, the cheeks being twice as full. In spite of the ugly style of dressing it, he saw also that the hair was like Ida's, and as for the nose, that feature which changes least, it might have been taken out of Ida's own face. As may be supposed, he was thoroughly disgusted to be reminded of that sweet girlish vision by this broadly moulded, comfortable-looking matron. His romantic mood was scattered for that evening at least, and he knew he shouldn't get the prosaic suggestions of the unfortunate resemblance out of his mind for a week at least. It would torment him as a humorous association spoils a sacred hymn.

He bowed with rather an ill grace, and was about to retire, when a certain peculiar turn of the neck as the lady acknowledged his salute, caught his eye and turned him to stone. Good God ! this woman was Ida !

He stood there in a condition of mental paralysis. The whole fabric of his thinking and feeling for months of intense emotional experience had instantly been annihilated; and he was left in the midst of a great void in his consciousness out of touching-reach of anything. There was no sharp pang, but just a bewildered numbness. A few filaments only of the romantic feeling for Ida that filled his mind a moment before still lingered, floating about it, unattached to anything, like vague neuralgic feelings in an amputated stump, as if to remind him of what had been there.

All this was as instantaneous as a galvanic shock the moment he had recognized—let us not say Ida, but this evidence that she was no more. It occurred to him that the woman, who stood staring, was in common politeness entitled to some explanation. He was in just that state of mind when the only serious interest having suddenly dropped out of the life, the minor conventionalities loom up as peculiarly important and obligatory.

“ You were Fraülein Ida Werner, and lived at No. — — strasse in 1866, *nicht wahr ?* ”

He spoke in a cold, dead tone, as if making a necessary but distasteful explanation to a stranger.

"Yes, truly," replied the woman, curiously ; "but my name is now Frau Stein," glancing at the children, who had been staring open-mouthed at the queer man.

"Do you remember Karl Randall? I am he."

The most formal of old acquaintances could hardly have recalled himself in a more indifferent manner.

"*Herr Gott im Himmel !*" exclaimed the woman with the liveliest surprise and interest. "Karl ! Is it possible. Yes, now I recognize you. Surely ! surely !"

She clapped one hand to her bosom, and dropped on the bench to recover herself. Fleishy people, overcome by agitation, are rather disagreeable objects. Randall stood looking at her with a singular expression of aversion on his listless face. But after panting a few times the woman recovered her vivacity and began to ply him vigorously with exclamations and questions, beaming the while with delighted interest. He answered her like a school-boy, too destitute of presence of mind to do otherwise than to yield passively to her impulse. But he made no inquiries whatever of her, and did not distantly allude to the reason of his presence in Germany. As he stood there looking at her, the real facts about that matter struck him as so absurd and incredible, that he couldn't believe them himself.

Pretty soon he observed that she was becoming a little conscious in her air, and giving a slightly

sentimental turn to the conversation. It was not for some time that he saw her drift, so utterly without connection in his mind were Ida and this comfortable matron before him, and when he did, a smile at the exquisite absurdity of the thing barely twitched the corners of his mouth, and ended in a sad, puzzled stare that rather put the other out of countenance.

But the children had now for some time been whimpering for supper and home, and at length Frau Stein rose, and, with an urgent request that Randall should call on her and see her husband, bade him a cordial adieu. He stood there watching her out of sight with an unconscious smile of the most refined and subtle cynicism. Then he sat down and stared vacantly at the close-cropped grass on the opposite side of the path. By what handle should he lay hold of his thoughts?

That woman could not retroact and touch the memory of Ida. That dear vision remained intact. He drew forth his locket and opening it gazed passionately at the fair girlish face, now so hopelessly passed away. By that blessed picture he could hold her and defy the woman. Remembering that fat, jolly, comfortable matron, he should not at least ever again have to reproach himself with his cruel treatment of Ida. And yet why not? What had the woman to do with her? She had suffered as much as if the woman had not forgotten it all. His reckoning was with Ida — was with her. Where should he find her? In what limbo could

he imagine her? Ah, that was the wildering cruelty of it. She was not this woman, nor was she dead in any conceivable natural way so that her girlish spirit might have remained eternally fixed. She was nothing. She was nowhere. She only existed in this locket and her only soul was in his heart, far more surely than in this woman who had forgotten her.

Death was a hopeful, cheerful state compared to that nameless nothingness that was her portion. For had she been dead he could still have loved her soul ; but now she had none. The soul that once she had, and if she had then died, might have kept, had been forfeited by living on and had passed to this woman, and would from her pass on further till finally fixed and vested in the decrepitude of age by death. So then it was death and not life that secured the soul, and his sweet Ida had none because she had not died in time. Ah ! had not he heard somewhere that the soul is immortal and never dies? Where then was Ida's? She had disappeared utterly out of the universe. She had been transformed, destroyed, swallowed up in this woman, a living sepulchre, more cruel than the grave, for it devoured the soul as well as the body. Pah ! this prating about immortality was absurd, convicted of meaninglessness before a tragedy like this ; for what was an immortality worth that was given to her last decrepit phase of life, after all its beauty and strength and loveliness had passed soulless away? To be aught but a

mockery immortality must be as manifold as the manifold phases of life. Since life devours so many souls, why suppose death will spare the last one?

But he would contend with destiny. Painters should multiply the face in his locket. He would immortalize her in a poem. He would constantly keep the lamp trimmed and burning before her shrine in his heart. She should live in spite of the woman.

But he could now never make amends to her for the suffering his cruel, neglectful youth had caused her. He had scarcely realized before how much the longing to make good that wrong had influenced his quest of her. Tears of remorse for an unattonable crime gathered in his eyes. He might indeed enrich this woman, or educate her children, or pension her husband; but that would be no atonement to Ida.

And then as if to intensify that remorse by showing still more clearly the impossibility of atonement, it flashed on him that he who loved Ida was not the one to atone for an offence of which he would be incapable, which had been committed by one who despised her love. Justice was a meaningless word, and amends were never possible, nor can men ever make atonement; for, ere the debt is paid, the atonement made, one who is not the sufferer stands to receive it, while, on the other hand, the one who atones is not the offender, but one who comes after him, loathing his offence and

himself incapable of it. The dead must bury their dead. And thus pondering from personal to general thoughts, the turmoil of his feelings gradually calmed, and a restful melancholy, vague and tender, filled the aching void in his heart.

KIRBY'S COALS OF FIRE.

BY LOUISE STOCKTON.

CONSIDERING it simply as an excursion, George Scott thought, leaning over the side of the canal-boat and looking at the shadow of the hills in the water, his plan for spending his summer vacation might be a success, but he was not so sure about his opportunities for studying human nature under the worst conditions. It was true that the conditions were bad enough, but so were the results, and George was not in search of logical sequences. He had been in the habit of saying that nothing interested him as much as the study of his fellows ; and that he was in earnest was proved by the fact that even his college experiences had not yet disheartened him, although they had cost him not a few neckties and coats, and sometimes too many of his dollars. But George had higher aspirations, and was not disposed to be satisfied

with the opportunities presented by crude collegians or even learned professors, and so meant to go out among men. When he was younger,—a year or two before,—he had dreamed of a mission among the Indians, fancying that he would reach original principles among them ; but the Modocs and Captain Jack had lowered his faith, while the Rev. Dr. Buck's story of how the younger savages had been taught to make beds and clean knives, until they preferred these civilized occupations to their old habit of scampering through the woods, had dispelled more of the glitter, and he had resolved to confine his labors to his white brethren. He did not mean to seek his opportunities among the rich, nor among the monotonously dreary poor of the city, but in a fresher field. Like most theological students, he was well read in current literature, and he had learned how often the noblest virtues are found among the roughest classes. It was true, they were sometimes so latent that like the jewel in a toad's head they had the added grace of unexpectedness, but that did not interfere with the fact of their existence. He had read of California gamblers who had rushed from tables where they had sat with bowie-knives between their teeth, to warn a coming train of broken rails, and, when picked up maimed and dying, had simply asked if the children were saved, and then, content, had turned aside and died. He knew the story of the Mississippi engineer who, going home with a long-sought fortune to claim his waiting bride, had

saved his boat from wreck by supplying the want of fuel by hat, coat, boots, wedding-clothes, gloves, favors, and finally his bag of greenbacks and Northern Pacific bonds, then returning to his duty, sans money, sans wife, but plus honor and a rewarding conscience. When men are capable of such heroism, George would say, arguing from these and similar stories, they are open to true reformation, all that is necessary being some exercise of an influence that shall make such impulses constant instead of spasmodic.

About noon he had not been quite so sanguine regarding his mission, and had almost resolved that when they reached Springfield he would return East and join some of his class who were going to the Kaatskills. The sun was then pouring down directly on the boat, the cabin was stifling, the horses crept sluggishly along, the men were rude and brutal, and around him was an atmosphere of frying fish and boiling cabbage. The cabbage was perhaps the crowning evil ; for while he found it possible to force his ear and eye to be deaf and blind to the disagreeable, he had no amount of will that could conquer the sense of smell. There seemed to be little, he thought, with some contempt for his expectations, to reward his quest or maintain his theory that every one had at least one story to tell. It was not necessarily one's own story, he had said, but lives the most barren in incident come into contact with those more vehement, and have the chance of looking

into tragedies, into moral victories and fierce conflicts, through other men's eyes. He had hinted something of this to Joe Lakin early in the morning, when the mist was rising off the hills, when the air was fresh and keen, and the sun was making the long lines of oil upon the river glitter like so many brilliant snakes. Joe was the laziest and roughest of the men on the boat, but he sometimes had such a genial and even superior manner, that George had felt sure that he would comprehend his meaning. Thus when noon came, hot, close, and heavy with prophecy of dinner, George had sickened of human nature and of psychological studies ; but now the sun had set, and a golden glory lit the sky ; the fields on one side of the river rolled away green in clover and wavy in corn, the hills heavily wooded rose high and picturesquely on the other side, and the little island in the bend of the river seemed the home of quiet and of peace. The horses plodded patiently through the water, going out on the shallows and avoiding the deeper currents near the shore, and the boys, forgetting to shout and swear, rode along softly whistling. Over by the hills stood a cottage, and in the terraced garden a group of girls with bright ribbons in their hair were playing quoits with horseshoes. A rowboat was carrying passengers over the river to meet the evening train, and under the sweetness of the twilight George's spirits arose lightly to their level, his old faith returned to him, and he looked up with a new sense of fellowship.

to Joe, who was filling a pipe with his favorite "towhead."

"It's a pity you don't smoke," said Joe, carefully striking a match and holding his cap before it, "for it seems a gift thrown away; and this tobacco is uncommon good, though you might fancy it a notion too strong. I've noticed that most preachers smoke, although they don't take kindly to drinking. I suppose they think it wouldn't seem the proper thing, and perhaps it wouldn't; but there's Parson Robinson,—I should think that a good, solid drink would be a real comfort to him sometimes. He's got a hard pull of it with a half share of victuals and a double share of children, so the two ends hardly ever see each other, much less think of meeting."

George hesitated for reply. He thought Joe was unnecessarily rough at times, and alluded to the ministry much too frequently. He had fancied when he left home that his blue flannel and gray tweed, with rather a jovial manner, would divest him of all resemblance to a theological student, and enable him to meet his companions on the ground of a common humanity, especially as he had at present no missionary intentions excepting those that might flow indirectly from his personal influence. Still, while he wanted Joe to recognize his broad liberality, he owed it to himself not to be loose in his expression of opinion.

"Well, yes," he said, slowly, "I suppose it would help a man to forget his troubles for a time,

but the getting over the spree and coming back to the same old bothers, not a bit better for the forgetting, would hardly be much comfort, even if the thing were right."

"Maybe not," replied Joe; "I s'pose it wouldn't be comfortable if those were your feelin's, but I reckon you don't know much about it unless from hearsay. But I tell you one thing, whiskey's a friend to be trusted"—adding, slowly, with a glance at George's face—"to get you into trouble if you let it get the upper hand of you. It's like a woman in that! It begins with the same letter too, and that's another likeness!"

George made no answer to this joke, over which Joe chuckled enough for both, and then returned to the charge:

"I've seen a good deal of life, one way and another," Joe said, "but I don't know much of parsons. Somehow they haven't been in my line; but if I had to choose between being a parson or a doctor, I'd take the doctor by long odds. You see the world's pretty much of a hospital as far as he's concerned, and when he can't tinker a man up, he lets him slide off and nobody minds; but the parson's different. When a man takes sick he looks kind of friendly on the doctor, because, you see, he expects him to cure him; but when the parson comes, he tells him what a miserable sinner he is and what he's coming to at last. Now, it ain't in nature to like that, and I don't blame the fellows who say they can stand a parson when they are

well, but that he's worse than a break-bone fever and no water handy when they're sick. And I shouldn't think any man would like to go about making himself unpleasant to others ! Leastways, I wouldn't. Kicking Kirby used to say that he'd rather be a woman than a parson, and the force of language couldn't go further than that ! He knew what he was talking about, for some of his folks were preachers ; and there was good in Kirby, too ! People may say what they please, but I'll allers hold to *that* !"

" Who was he ?" asked George, happy to change the subject, being a little uneasy in his hold upon it, and hopeful of a story at last.

Joe looked over the hills.

" Well, he was a friend of mine when I was prospecting for oil, once. I allers liked Kicking Kirby."

George sat patiently waiting, while Jim refilled his pipe and then began :

" There ain't so much to tell, but men do curious things sometimes, and Kirby, I guess, was a man few folks would have expected very much of. There was hard things said of him, but he could allers strike a blow for a friend, or hold his own with the next man, let him be who he might. You see, there were a good many of us in camp, and we had fair enough luck ; for the men over at Digger's Run had struck a good vein, so money was plenty and changed hands fast enough. We'd all hung together in our camp until Clint Bowers got into

trouble. None of the rest of us wanted to get mixed up in the fuss, but somehow we did, and the other camp fought shy of us and played mostly among themselves ; and I've allers held that it is poor fun to take out of one pocket to put into the other. Our boys had different opinions about it, and some of them held that it wasn't Clint's awkward work that they'd got mad at, but that they meant to shut down on Kirby. You see, Kirby was a very lucky player, and although pretty rough things were said about it, nobody ever got a clear handle against him, and he wasn't the kind of fellow that was pleasant to affront. Kirby used to say it was all along of Clint ; that he ought to have been kept from the cards, or sent down the river ; that we'd have had a good run of luck all winter if it hadn't been for him. I don't know the rights properly, but I allers thought it was about six of one and a half dozen of the other. Anyhow, there was bad blood about it, and *that* don't run up-hill, you know, and so there was trouble soon enough. The boys got into words one night, and Kirby threw a mug at Clint, who out with his knife and was at Kirby like a flash. Lucky for him Clint's eyes weren't in good seeing order, and the liquor hadn't made his arm any the more steady, so Kirby only got a scratch on his arm. It showed what Clint would like to do, though, and some of the boys made pretty heavy bets on the end of it. I stuck up for Kirby, for you see I knew him pretty well, and there was true grit in him ; and then,

too, he was uncommon pleasant about it, and even stopped saying much about Clint's blocking up our luck over at the Run.

“ Well, just about then Jack White came over from Cambria and told Clint that he'd heard that his uncle was asking around where he was. You see, Clint's uncle had a store down there, and had made a tidy pile of money, and as he hadn't any children, he said he wouldn't mind leaving it to him if he was living respectable. Clint had lived with him when he was a boy, but they hadn't got along very well, so Clint ran off. The old man didn't mind this, though, and now he wanted to find him. Jack said he was sure that if Clint was to go over and play his cards right he'd get the money. You may be sure this was a stroke of luck for Clint just then, and he didn't like to lose it ; but you see he didn't look very genteel, and he knew his uncle was sharp enough to find it out. He was fat enough, for whiskey never made a living skeleton of him, but it was plain that it wasn't good health that had made his nose so red, nor fine manners that had given him the cut across his cheek and bruised up his eye. The boys all allowed that he was the hardest-looking chap in the camp, and if his uncle left him his money, it wouldn't be on the strength of his good countenance ! But you know he had to do something right off, and so he wrote as pretty a letter to the old man as ever I want to see ; but when the answer came it said his uncle was very sick, and as he had something particular

to say to him, wouldn't Clint come over at once, and inclosed he'd find the money for his fare. I tell you this stumped Clint, for he'd had another fight, and was a picture to behold.

"But here's where the surprise to us all came in. Clint was pretty well puzzled what to do, and while all the boys were advising him, Kirby spoke up. I'd noticed he was pretty quiet, but nobody could have guessed what he was thinking about. He looked some like Clint, and once had been pitched into by a new Digger Run boy for Clint. The fellow never made the second mistake about them. It wasn't as though they were twins, but they both had brown hair and long beards, blue eyes, and were about the same build, so you couldn't have made a descriptive list of the one that wouldn't have done for the other. What Kirby said was that Clint's uncle hadn't seen him since he was boy, and he'd expect to find him changed; and although he—that's Kirby, you know—had had hard feelin's to Clint, he wasn't a man to hold a grudge, and he'd let bygones be bygones. So if Clint thought well of it, he'd go over to Cambria, and if he found the land lay right he'd pass off for him, and make things sure.

"This struck us all of a heap, for we knew Kirby could do it if he choose and if nobody interfered with him, and that he really could cajole the old man better than Clint could; for when that fellow got wound up to talk he was allers going you five better. Some of the boys thought it rather risky,

and they wanted Clint to write and say he had the typhoid fever, and so stave it off until he looked fit to go ; but he knew that if he crossed his uncle now he'd likely enough lose everything, and so he thought it best to make sure and let Kirby go and see, anyhow. One thing that helped Kirby along was that his first wife had come from Cambria, and he'd heard her talk so much about the people that he knew nearly as much of them as Clint did. To make the matter sure, Clint stuffed him with all he remembered, and one night we got up a-practising ; and we made out that we were the folks, and Kirby pow-wowed to the minister, and old Miss Cranby—that was me !—and the doctor, until he knew his lesson and we'd nearly split our sides laughing.

“ Of course, seeing the interest we all took in it, we weren't going to do the thing half, so we clubbed together and got Kirby a suit of store-clothes and a shiny valise, and he went off as proper as a parson,—begging your pardon !—and we settled down again. He wrote pretty prompt, and said everything was going on as smooth as oil. The old man had called out that it was Clint as soon as he saw him, before he'd said a word, and Kirby wrote it would have been kind of cruel to have told him better. So he didn't. He wrote several more letters, and once Jack White had a letter from his sister saying that Clint Bowers had come home, and it was said that the old man was tickled to death with his manners, and meant to

leave him all he had. This clinched it sure enough, and Clint became tip-top among the boys, and his credit was good for all the drinks he chose to order, and I must say he was liberal enough, and nobody contradicted him. He wrote to Kirby,—he was all the time writing to him,—but this time he told how handsome he thought it was in him to do all this, considering everything. When the answer came, Kirby said he didn't profess much religion, and he thought that generally speakin' heaping coals of fire on any one's head was against the grain, but Clint was more than welcome to his services."

"He *was* a good fellow," exclaimed George. "I don't wonder you liked him!"

"Yes, *I* allers stood up for Kirby when the boys were hardest on him. But to finish up, for I'm telling an uncommon long yarn, at last a letter came saying that the old man was dead and the money fixed. How much it was Kirby couldn't say yet, but he meant to hurry matters up, he said. Of course he didn't put all he meant into plain words, for it wouldn't do to trust it, and he was allers more careful than Clint, who never knew when to hush. But now Kirby said he'd have everything straight inside of two weeks, and we weren't to look for another letter from him.

"Well, it *was* surprisin' how many birds Clint broiled for Kirby the next few weeks! You see, Kirby allers was a gentleman in his tastes, and had a particular liking for birds on toast, and of course

Clint wanted to give him a proper welcome home. We knew just when the boats were likely to come, and Clint was allers ready for a surprise."

"And he came just when he was least expected," said George, with a bright smile; "that is the way things always happen in this world. I am sure of that!"

"Why, no, bless your heart, *he* never came back! I allers knew he wouldn't! He bought a share in a circus with the money, and went down South. They said he married the girl who did the flying trapeze, but I'm not sure about that. Anyway, it appears he's done a good business, and I'm sure he's kept Clint's letters to him. There was true grit in Kirby, I've allers stuck to *that*! Does the pipe seem too strong for you? The wind does blow it your way, that's a fact."

PASSAGES FROM THE JOURNAL OF A SOCIAL WRECK.

BY MARGARET FLOYD.

JANUARY 13th, 188.—Twenty-nine to-day, with two painful facts staring me blankly in the face. I am reduced almost literally to my last cent, and have no prospect of increasing this sum. For the first time in my life I may as well examine the situation impartially. It is not my fault that it is a physical impossibility for me to get up early in the morning, and therefore that I never have stayed in any office more than two or three weeks at the longest. It is constitutional. I can't write a good hand, or keep books correctly, for the same reason. Mathematics were left out of my composition. I *must* smoke, and it is impossible for me to smoke a poor cigar. If I am in debt for cigars, as well as other necessities, how can I help

it? I would willingly work if I could only find the kind of work that would suit me. I am not a fool. There is not a man in New York who speaks French with a better accent than I do. I can sing better than most amateurs. There is no vanity in saying that people consider me good-looking. I don't find it difficult to please when I make an effort, and yet I am a complete failure. It is *not* my fault. I'm a round peg in a square hole. I ought to have been the oldest son of a duke, with a large allowance. Instead, I am a helpless orphan, with nothing a year. I seem to joke ; in reality I am in despair. Fortunately, my landlady trusts me blindly, or I would be turned into the street.

I have sold or pawned all my valuables. I might pawn my dress suit and studs, but if I did, I couldn't go out to dinner if I were asked, and that is always a saving. I cannot get a place in an opera company, because my voice has not been sufficiently trained. There always *is* something to prevent my success, no matter what I try.

To-day I met Morton in the street. He stopped me and said : " By the way, Valentine, your name will come up at the Amsterdam very soon. You are sure to get in."

Imagine paying club dues in my present condition ! Yet to belong to the Amsterdam has been one of my ambitions. I had to get out of it, and said, in an offhand way : " Ah, thanks, Morton,

but you may as well take my name off the list. I'm thinking of living out of town."

So I am—I think of occupying six feet of real estate in the country, if something doesn't happen soon. Morton always irritates me. He is one of those prosperous, fortunate creatures, always so completely *the thing*, that I feel hopelessly my own deficiencies.

January 15th.—Something *has* happened. I have an idea. It strikes me as strange, yet feasible. When I came in this afternoon I found a letter lying on my table. I opened it; it ran as follows :

“NEW YORK, January 14, 188—.

“Families who are about to give receptions, dinner parties, or other entertainments will be gratified to know that persons who will assist in making these events pleasant and enjoyable can be obtained through the medium of the Globe Employment Bureau. These persons will not be professionals, but parties of culture and refinement, who will appear well, dress elegantly, and mingle with the guests, while able and willing to play, sing, converse fluently, tell a good story, give a recitation, or anything that will help to make an evening pass pleasantly.

“The Globe Employment Bureau in this plan simply complies with the increasing demands of a large class of its patrons. The attendance of these persons, young or old, can be had for the sum of fifteen dollars per evening each. We will guaran-

tee them to be strictly honorable and reliable persons. Respectfully yours,

“THE GLOBE EMPLOYMENT BUREAU.”

The idea amused me. I moralized on it as a phase of New York society ; wondered what sort of people would employ these individuals ; wondered what the individuals would feel like themselves ; smiled grimly at the inference that I could go to the expense of fifteen dollars to procure the services of one of the persons. While I stood with the letter in my hand, a thought flashed into my mind. It widened and developed, until now it possesses my whole being. I can't hire a Globe young man, but anything is better than starvation : I will *be* a Globe young man !

January 18th.—It is all settled, and I am in the service of the New York Globe. After two days of hesitation, I presented myself this morning at the Globe office. I was shown to the Employment Bureau, and there, through a little grating, I was interviewed by a young clerk of supernatural composure. He had a cool discerning eye that seemed to read my very soul, and take in my situation and errand at a glance. I produced the Globe letter as the simplest method of introducing myself.

He looked at me with his discriminating expression. “Let me see,” he murmured. “We have had three thousand applications since the day before yesterday, and our list is complete. But six feet — blonde — good-looking — distinguished, in

fact"—he bit the handle of his pen meditatively. His air of reflection changed to one of decision. "Just follow me, please," he concluded.

I followed him through a dim passage to a little room where there was a piano with some music on it. Standing beside the piano was a small dark man, rubbing his hands and bowing politely as we entered. It reminded me of one of the torture chambers of the Inquisition. What were they going to do to me?

The chief inquisitor, in the shape of the clerk, began the ceremonies by saying: "I suppose you would not have come here without being able to fill the requirements of the Globe circular. Be kind enough to sit down and sing and play that song."

It proved to be "In the Gloaming." I was in good voice, and managed to sing it with some expression.

"Bravo!" said the second inquisitor, in the shape of the little dark man.

He then took me in hand. He proved to be an Italian, and asked me questions in Italian and French, in both of which languages I answered as well as I could. I was then obliged to sing pathetic songs, drinking songs, comic songs, opéra bouffe, English ballads, and then—worse than all—requested to recite some dramatic poetry. Here I was at sea. I confessed that I knew none.

"Never mind," said the clerk, encouragingly; "you have done remarkably well in other respects, and you can easily learn the regulation pieces."

He handed me a list, beginning with "Curfew shall not ring To-night" and "The Charge of the Light Brigade," and ending with "Betsy and I are Out" and "The May Queen." I choked down my rising resentment. What wouldn't I do for fifteen dollars an evening, short of crime?

"Very well," I said, obediently.

I was led out of the torture chamber, exhausted, but still living. It is queer. I feel shaky. I had to give them my own name. I found that there was no getting out of this. They said that the whole matter was strictly in confidence. They required references, and I had taken the precaution to bring several letters of recommendation from well-known business men—letters that had been given to me a short while before when I was trying to get a situation in a business house down town. These were satisfactory as to my character.

I have put the halter around my own neck now.

N.B.—Suppose Morton were to find this out!

January 20th.—I have had my first experience in my new character. I had been told to be ready every afternoon by five o'clock for orders. Yesterday, about six in the afternoon, I received a message from the Globe, directing me to go to a house in East Seventy-fourth Street, near Fifth Avenue, at nine o'clock that evening, and submit myself to the orders of Mr. Q. K. Slater. It was a consoling thought that I had never heard of Mr. Q. K. Slater, and that East Seventy-fourth Street was an unknown region to me.

Punctually at nine that evening I found myself in the large parlor of a house in Seventy-fourth Street, brightly lighted, and filled with people. The centre of the room was cleared, and several people were dancing to the strains of a band. Near the door stood a tall imposing gentleman with gray whiskers, and a lady in full evening dress. Doubtless my hosts, or rather my proprietors.

What was I to do? How were they to know who and what I was? As I stood hesitating, I found that their eyes were fixed upon me with a significant glance. I immediately went toward them. To my astonishment the lady greeted me by my name with the utmost suavity.

“Good-evening, Mr. Valentine,” she said. “I am delighted to see you.”

Mr. Slater murmured something that sounded like “How do you do?”

I said that I was delighted to meet—see them. Mrs. Slater turned to another lady standing near her.

“Mrs. Raggles, *do* let me introduce Mr. Valentine. We were so afraid that he would not be able to come.”

While I talked as well as I could to Mrs. Raggles, I surreptitiously observed my host and hostess. Mr. Slater looked uncomfortable. There was a consciousness in his uneasy manner that if I was a sham, so was he. I feared that he might give us both away before the evening was

over. Mrs. Slater, on the contrary, soared above any feeling of this sort. Her party was to be a success ; that was evidently her principal object. What a comfort this was to me ! I felt safe in her hands. Of course it was as much of an object to her as to me to conceal the fact that I was not a *bona fide* invited guest. I took my cue at once. Avoid Mr. Slater ; arrange matters in such a way that Mrs. Slater could engineer me through the evening. All the time I had a sensation that in avoiding Mr. Slater I was avoiding an old and tried friend. There was something strangely familiar in his face ; in the almost courtly wave of his hand as he directed his guests to the refreshment-room ; in his protecting manner as he walked about, first with one lady, then with another. I cannot recall distinctly the events of the evening. I have a confused impression of lights, flowers, music, and people, much like any other party, yet with certain differences. The dressing was not in particularly good taste, and the German was managed in a most extraordinary manner. At eleven o'clock the man who was to lead it came forward with a hat containing scraps of paper. I noticed that all the men went up and drew a slip of paper. They examined it, and retired into the crowd. I couldn't imagine what this ceremony meant, and felt sure that when my turn came I should make some frightful blunder. As I thought this, I found Mrs. Slater beside me. She hurriedly explained to me that this party was one of a series of Germans

given at the houses of her friends, and that there had been some feeling on the part of certain young ladies because others had been oftener asked to dance the German and drive home afterward than they had. In order to obviate this a system of lots had been arranged, by which chance alone decided the matter. "Each young gentleman," concluded Mrs. Slater, "can bring any young lady that he wishes to the party; but he is expected to go home with the lady whom he draws for the German. I hope you understand what is expected of you. You dance, of course?" she added, with a slightly stern manner—the manner of a proprietor. I said that I could.

Accordingly I drew my lot, and found myself the partner of a pretty girl, who proved to be the daughter of Mrs. Raggles.

This is my journal; no one will ever see it; I can be honest. I impressed Miss Raggles. I think I impressed every one that I met. I realized that on the mere making a good impression depended my success in the future. To talk, to dance, to flirt, to eat ice-cream, at the rate of three or four dollars an hour—for the present this was my profession. Why not elevate it, glorify it, by doing these things better than any one else had ever done them? There was an exhilaration in the thought. It positively inspired me. I was in constant demand, and was presented to almost every one. Toward the end of the evening Mrs. Slater asked me to sing. I thought it odd for a large

party, but I sang my best. One thing damped my spirits. I had been standing in the doorway, when I suddenly became aware of two waiters who were whispering together at a short distance. In a lull of the music their words reached me.

"Which did yer say he was?" said one in a loud whisper.

"That's him—him there by the door, the good-lookin' fellow. Looks as if he didn't have nothin' in the world to do but stand there all the evening," answered the other.

"You don't say!" ejaculated the first; "and he gets fifteen dollars for doin' the likes of that? You and me has missed our vocation, Bill."

I could have knocked down the impertinent fellows, but, after all, what right had I to do it? It was all true. "Noblesse oblige," I muttered through my clinched teeth; and catching Mrs. Slater's stern glance, I went to do my duty by taking my partner to supper.

At the close of the evening Mr. Slater came up to me. He was certainly a dignified-looking old fellow, but he seemed unhappy. "Well, Mr. Valentine," he said, with rather a melancholy smile, "you have done remarkably well. Been quite the life of the evening. Trying thing to entertain a party of this size. This is the first time we have done it. How do you think it went off? Your candid opinion now."

"Remarkably well," I said.

I noticed that his manner to me was secret and

confidential, as if we had entered into some dark partnership of crime.

"Mrs. Slater," he continued, "is an ambitious woman, and it was her idea having you. She wanted a different style of young man from those we have been accustomed to, and"—looking at me with a sad pride—"she got it—she got it."

As I looked at him his face seemed to grow more familiar. At this moment Miss Raggles, who had gone upstairs to get her cloak, made her appearance. I bade a hurried good-night to Mr. and Mrs. Slater, and accompanied the young lady home. She lived in that part of Fifth Avenue which is on the confines of both New York and Harlem. She treated me as a distinguished stranger, and ended by inviting me to call. Unsuspecting Miss Raggles! Her mother had apparently gone home hours before. In the Slater set they managed things in this way.

I wonder when I am to be paid.

January 22d.—I have discovered where I have seen Mr. Slater before. I stopped at Stewart's yesterday to buy some gloves (I was paid the morning after the Slater party), and as I walked down the shop one of the individuals popularly known as "walkers" approached me.

"What do you desire, sir?" I heard a pompous voice say. "Where may I direct you?"

"Gloves," I said, mechanically.

"Third section on the right hand, Fourth Avenue side, sir."

I looked at my guide, as a familiar tone struck my ear. It was Mr. Slater. At the same instant he recognized me. A moment before we had been independent human beings—at the next our consciousness of the mutual knowledge we possessed of each other destroyed our comfort. Mr. Slater walked away in one direction and I in another. Still, it was a comfort to know where I had seen him before.

January 27th.—I find that a whole week has elapsed since I have written anything in my journal. The truth is, I have been too miserable. This occupation is degrading. Everywhere I go some fresh humiliation awaits me. The very servants look on me with suspicion. At one place the butler followed me around all the evening as if I were a thief. I don't think any one noticed it, yet I could not rid myself of the feeling that Morton, who happened to be there, looked at me suspiciously once or twice. Suppose he were to discover everything, and tell it at the club! It is too hideous to be thought of.

At another house, where I had been obliged to sing comic songs and make a buffoon of myself for two hours, my host—an enormously rich and illiterate person—presented me with a check for twenty-five dollars as I left the house. I returned it indignantly, but he pressed it into my hand, saying, heartily :

“I ain't goin' to take it back, so you may as well keep it. You done first-rate this evening—

first-rate ! 'Tain't charity, but because what you done is worth more than fifteen dollars by a long shot ; and when I have pleasure, I expect to pay for it, like I do for everything else."

To avoid a scene, I had to keep the money. I am certainly richer than I was. I have been able, by my honest exertions, to supply myself with the luxuries without which I cannot exist ; and when my present income is doubled, I shall be able to pay something on account for my board bill here, and settle some of my other bills. The question that now troubles me is, Are they *honest* exertions ?

Since the evening at Mr. Griddle's (the rich manufacturer who gave me the check) I have been to several places, at all of which, among others that I knew, I saw Morton. His manner is becoming most unpleasant. He said to me the other night, with that satirical grin of his :

" You're getting to be quite a society man, Valentine. Never used to see you about so much. It's always been my way, but it's something new for you."

I felt sure he suspected something. Another time he said :

" By the way, I thought you were going out of town to live ? As you seem to have changed your mind, I suppose it is all right about the Amsterdam ?"

I would not dare to join a club now. I stammered out something about talking it over another time, and left the room. I begin to hate him. He

suspects the truth, and knows that I am in his power, and enjoys it.

February 4th.—Added to the mortifications I am exposed to, the feeling that I am a sham grows on me. I impose on every one wherever I go. This thought has robbed me of my peace of mind. However poor I was before, I had nothing to be ashamed of. Now I am a man with a *Secret*.

February 5th.—I have realized this too late. Last night I was sent for to fill a place at a dinner-table where fourteen had been expected, and at the last minute one had failed. Mr. Courtland, the gentleman at whose house the dinner was given, treated me politely before his guests, yet with him I felt all the odium of my position. I was there as a convenience, and nothing else. My relation to him was purely a business one. The house was on Washington Square, and was old-fashioned but magnificent. The dining-room was hung with tapestry, and we sat around the dinner-table in carved arm-chairs. I made a pretence of talking to the old lady whom I took in to dinner, and whom I had met before, but in reality my attention was absorbed by a beautiful young girl who sat opposite to me. She had dark hair, brilliant coloring, and deep-set brown eyes. She wore an oddly old-fashioned gown of yellow satin, cut square in the neck. I found that she was Mr. Courtland's niece and heiress, and lived with him. He was a widower without any children. After dinner, when the men went into the drawing-room, I de-

terminated to leave. Mr. Courtland's manner was too much for my self-respect. Miss Courtland stood by the piano, and every one was begging her to sing.

"My music has gone to be bound," she said, "and I cannot sing without it."

Her uncle would not accept this refusal, and produced a portfolio of old music. His niece selected a duet for soprano and tenor, and said that she would sing if any one would take the tenor; she stood with the music in her hand, looking dubiously at the circle of men around her. Not one could sing. Mrs. Delancey, my companion at the dinner-table, looked at me.

"Mr. Valentine sings, Helen. I am sure he will be happy to sing with you."

Miss Courtland turned to me with a smile that was positively bewildering. "Will you sing this duet with me, Mr. Valentine?"

Mr. Courtland flashed a furious glance at me, which said, "Don't dare to sing with my niece." Of all my humiliations this stung me the most. Mr. Courtland, however, seemed to regret having shown so much feeling, for his manner changed.

"I hope you will oblige us by singing, Mr. Valentine," he said, stiffly.

Of course I sang, although I was tempted to refuse, and leave the house instead. How could I refuse Miss Courtland? Her voice was exquisite—sympathetic. It made me feel as though I could confide in her. What if I should! Yes, and be

cut the next time we met. I felt painfully the chasm that divided us, gentle and cordial as she was, and left as soon as the song was over. I wonder whether I shall see her again?

February 13th.—I have been out several times this week, and twice have met Miss Courtland. Her uncle never goes out, and Mrs. Delancey chaperons her. She always seems glad to see me, and certainly has the most charming manners. Never mind the fact of my being a whited sepulchre. Let me enjoy the goods the gods have sent me. That confounded Morton! he is always at Miss Courtland's elbow, and when he succeeds in engaging her to dance before I do, he looks at me with his insolent smile.

February 15th.—Morton's malice is unspeakable. Feeling convinced as I do that he suspects my secret, it is positive torture to see him talk to Miss Courtland as he did last night. He evidently spoke of me, and she listened to him, looking at me meanwhile with a surprised expression. That man has me in his power.

February 20th.—I feel that it is unprincipled to send Miss Courtland flowers, for two reasons—first, because I cannot do it and pay my bills as well; secondly, because it adds to my deception in making a friend of her, and yet I cannot resist the temptation to show her my admiration.

February 21st.—Matters are coming to a climax. Last night Miss Courtland said, with a dignified sweetness that was irresistible: "Mr. Valentine, I

have noticed that you have never been to see me. I have not asked you, because I supposed you would feel at liberty to come after having dined with my uncle."

"I assure you, Miss Courtland," I said, "I should of course have done so, but the truth is I have had a slight misunderstanding with your uncle, and I do not feel that I can go to his house."

Of course I added a lie to the rest of my duplicity. Her face was lighted with a charming smile. "That is no reason for not coming; you owe my uncle a call at all events. I will be at home to-morrow—no, Thursday afternoon. Come in about five o'clock, and I will give you a cup of tea. My uncle is never at home until six o'clock, and when he does come in, never sees visitors. Even if you do meet him, it will be a good opportunity to make your peace with him."

In a kind of dream I recklessly consented.

Morton came pushing up at that moment.

"By the way, Miss Courtland," he said, "will you be at home Thursday afternoon? If so, with your permission, I will call upon you."

Of course he had overheard me, and wished to irritate me. Fortunately some one spoke to Miss Courtland at that moment, and she turned away without having heard Morton. For once my anger flamed out. I caught him by the arm, and held it like a vise.

"Be careful," I said, between my teeth. "This sort of thing may go too far."

He gave me a furious look, and shaking me off, left the room.

February 22d. TWO A.M.—My brain is reeling. My world is upside down. There is no use in trying to sleep. I will write down what has happened. It may calm me. This evening when I entered the house where I was to entertain others at the expense of my self-respect, I found I was before the time. The rooms were empty, with the exception of my hostess, a very old lady, who held a formidable ear-trumpet in her hand. Preceding me down the brightly lighted room was a gentleman. There was something unpleasantly familiar in the cut of his coat and the carriage of his head. It was my evil genius, Morton. I made up my mind to wait until some one else came, before going in. As I stood in the background this scene was enacted before me :

Morton bowed. The old lady looked blankly at him.

"I am Mr. Morton, madam," said he.

She continued to stare at him, and then held out her trumpet. Morton took it, and repeated his words into its depths.

"Horton?" she said, interrogatively.

"Morton," he called.

"Oh yes, Lawton—Mr. Lawton."

"Morton!" he fairly shouted.

"Oh yes," she said, intelligence breaking over her face. "Morton—Mr. Morton, from the Globe office. Where's the other? There were to have

been two. Just take care of yourself, please, for a moment. I have to go and see about something."

She tottered out of the room, and Morton, turning, confronted me. He saw that I had overheard all. Before I could speak he came toward me with an air of desperation.

"For Heaven's sake don't betray me, Valentine, now that you know my secret," he exclaimed. "I have felt from the first that you suspected—that I was in your power. I throw myself on your mercy. In your safe and prosperous condition you don't know—you can't know—what a frightful position I am in."

My face must have changed in some ghastly manner as he spoke, for he stopped and looked at me with deepening consternation.

"What is it? What's the matter?" he asked.

I saw my mistake, and tried to look unconcerned, but at that moment the old lady came back into the room.

"Oh, there's the other," she said, as she saw me. "His name's Valentine, so that's all right."

Several people came into the room, and she went forward to greet them. Morton looked at me in dazed silence for a minute; then he seemed to master his astonishment by a mighty effort.

"So," he said, huskily, "we are quits. I am in your power, but you are equally in mine. Be careful how you interfere with me."

We did not speak again together during the evening. What is to be the end of this? To-

morrow I go to see Miss Courtland, and I have made up my mind to confess everything. Perhaps she will think no worse of me. The queen still loved Ruy Blas after she found he was a lackey.

What nonsense am I dreaming of?

February 23d.—The game is up. I went this afternoon to Mr. Courtland's house, and found Miss Courtland at home, alone. She was in a dim little room, with the firelight flickering on her beautiful face. She saw that I was constrained and anxious, and at once asked me the reason. Something in her kind manner broke down my composure.

"Miss Courtland," I said, "how would you feel if I were to confess that I have been deceiving you—that I am not what I seem to be?"

"What do you mean?" she asked, anxiously.

"Tell me first," I said, "that whatever I tell you, you will still be my friend, and will believe me when I say that I have not wished to deceive you—that I have bitterly regretted it."

She looked at me with a frank smile. "You may depend upon me."

In a few words I told her everything from the time of my going to the Globe office up to that moment. She listened gravely; then she turned to me again with a smile.

"You have told me nothing dishonorable (although you can surely find something better to do), and I will still be your friend. I am glad you

told me, for Mr. Morton said some things about you last night that made me fear—”

This was too hard, and I interrupted her.

“Morton !” I said. “Morton is the last person to dare to say anything against me.”

Here I checked myself, but Miss Courtland’s curiosity was aroused.

“What do you mean ?” she asked.

“Nothing,” I said. “I will not talk of Morton ; it is enough that you are still my friend.”

“Certainly I am,” she said.

She held out her hand as she spoke, and I took it and raised it to my lips. At the same moment two people entered the room by different doors. One was Mr. Courtland ; the other, Morton. Mr. Courtland seemed stupefied with astonishment, for he stood motionless, but Morton strode toward me.

“How dare you !” he gasped. “I will expose you.”

His audacity was too much for my self-control.

“Morton,” I said, in a low tone, “as your position is the same as mine, I warn you to be careful of what you say.”

I spoke louder than I intended, and Miss Courtland heard my words. She gave Morton a keen look.

“Ah ! now I understand !” she exclaimed, as if involuntarily.

As she said this Morton became very white, and muttering something about a broken engagement,

with a hasty good-by to Mr. Courtland, left the room. He had gone a step too far at last. Mr. Courtland had by this time recovered from his astonishment.

“What do you mean by this astounding impertinence !” he exclaimed, coming toward me. He turned to his niece : “Helen, do you know on what terms this man first came here ? I hired him—hired him from the Globe Employment Bureau to fill an empty place at my dinner-table. I did not warn you against him, for I thought you would not meet him again. I trusted also to his sense of decency, but I was mistaken. Your honesty was guaranteed, sir. You have not taken my silver, but you have done worse. This shall be reported to the Globe Employment Bureau immediately. First, leave this house. I shall go at once to the Globe office.”

He paused for an instant.

“My dear uncle,” said Miss Courtland, quietly, “Mr. Valentine has just told me all this himself. He only came here because I asked him to come.”

Mr. Courtland would not listen to any explanations, but only repeated his assertion that he would report me at the Globe office. There was nothing for me to do but to go.

I gave Miss Courtland one look of gratitude, then I left the house. I have but two consolations : one, that Miss Courtland still trusts me ; the other, that Morton is as badly off as I am—rather worse.

My dismissal from the Globe has just come. It

is a relief to be free from this bondage, but I am as much in debt as usual, and what am I to do in the future ?

February 24th.—A light is beginning to break on my dark horizon. I have just received a note from Miss Courtland telling me that her uncle has been pacified by her explanations ; that as I am no longer in the employ of the Globe, I am at liberty to come to his house ; and that she is sure I will find something better to do in the future.

I can't help thinking of Ruy Blas and the queen again. I feel like Ruy Blas come back to life, and *my* queen is not married.

STELLA GRAYLAND.

BY JAMES T. MCKAY.

“SO Miss Brainard’s father’s gone, Doctor.”
It was the young minister’s clear, hearty voice that spoke. “I feel very sorry for Miss Brainard, very sorry indeed. He has been a great care to her, and it’s a release to both, no doubt; but it leaves a great void. She’s very good and useful, and she has been a faithful daughter. She’s very much overcome; it seems to her as if she were alone in the world.”

Dr. Enfield’s heart smote him. He knew Cora Brainard much better than the minister, who had not been very long in the place, but his thought of her had not been gentle of late. The picture of her in such trouble affected him with a remorseful tenderness. He turned his horse and drove to her door.

He found her alone; she had been crying, and looked tremulous and downcast, but was trim and

pretty, as always. She called him Lawrence and asked him in, then nestled herself childishly in the corner of the sofa and dried her eyes. Enfield stood before her, remembering many things.

"I am very sorry, Cora," he said. "Can I do anything for you?"

He spoke low and with something like contrition.

"You're long in coming to show it," she complained. "You've been very unkind."

"I used to come quick enough and often enough," he rejoined in the subdued tone.

"Yes, and then you stayed away of a sudden, and when I asked you the reason, you laughed at me and deserted me altogether, when you knew I looked to you for advice and assistance, and had most need of them."

Her reproach stung him. The charge of unfaithfulness to a friend was one he took keenly. There was a mingled sternness and entreaty in his voice when he replied :

"Won't you let that go now? This is no time for bandying reproaches. I think I was your faithful friend for a long while. If I failed in my duty to you, I am sure I did not know it. And if I changed, it was because I thought I had been mistaken and had been going for years with my eyes shut. I thought I had been a fool and it was time — but that's of no account now. I am your friend still ; let me prove it."

But she persisted in her high, child-like complaint.

“ Was it my fault, then, you had not seen me, truly ? I never tried to deceive you. I always put confidence in you and talked frankly to you, as I never did to any one else. And you know I’ve had a hard time. I was never meant for the tiresome, lonely life I’ve had. I never wanted to be a pattern and model of usefulness and self-forgetfulness, but they would have me so, and I couldn’t go out in the streets and tell them I was not. I’ve had to play the part till I’m tired. I’ve had to walk demurely, and talk and smile to people I despised, and do all sorts of miserable things. But I never pretended to you. You knew I was not satisfied or happy. I used to tell you all my troubles and ask your advice about everything. And you know you said harsh things to me sometimes. You knew me better than any one else, and I did not think you would ever treat me so. Did you think only of what was due to yourself, and that our long friendship and the reliance you had encouraged me to place in you gave me no claim upon you ? ”

Her words hurt and agitated him greatly. Was she right ? and had he been doubly blind ? In this grieved, reproachful, petulant humor, she seemed a different being from the Cora Brainard he had had in his thought these last months ; she was the little girl that the big boy, Lawrence Enfield, had protected and drawn on his sled, the maiden he had cherished in his heart for many a day ; and he had been purer and braver for the thought of

her. Did he owe her nothing for that? He was very sensitive to people's claims upon him. His heart bled and was afraid for her. He could not see her way. He knew she had had a hard time, —harder than people dreamed. They thought her long service and support of her invalid father were made easy by a love of duty and by exceptional ability. Enfield knew that, though she had rare tact and succeeded admirably, all sordid care and labor were extremely repugnant to her. She had said she never had anything she liked; he would have expressed it, that she never liked anything she had. He thought that a very melancholy case. That she liked the society of spirited young men, he had learned to his sorrow more than once or twice; or, at least, that they were very apt to like her; but they were all sent (or went) about their business one after another.

Enfield had a friend named Loramer, who had been one of the spirited fellows at one time, and the episode had been a severe strain upon their friendship. It was a summer vacation of Loramer's, when he made Miss Brainard's acquaintance, and he had found her bright, piquant face, and light, laughing chatter very appetizing. He met her upon riding and sailing parties, sat and walked and drove with her. Enfield avoided them both awhile, then spoke offensively to Loramer, and got scornful laughter in reply. They did not meet again for some time.

One evening Loramer brought Cora home from

a drive. He lifted her out, and they stood talking there together under the trees. He made an appointment to go rowing with her the next day, and they parted, with some show of reluctance on his part, and low laughter on hers.

He scratched a match and lighted a cigar, as he drove down the street. As he passed through the town, he saw some one going before him on the foot-path. He let his horse walk, and watched the man till he turned a corner. He turned the horse after him, overtook him, and stopped opposite and said :

“ Enfield, come and ride.”

He stood by a tree a minute or two, looking, then came and got in.

They rode along, each in his corner.

“ Have a cigar ?” said Loramer.

“ No,” answered Enfield.

Loramer took his own from his mouth and flung it away. He struck the horse with the whip, Enfield put his hand on the reins, and said, steadily :

“ Don’t do that, the mare’s willing enough ; she’s tired.”

Loramer pulled her up, and let her walk a mile or more, up among the hills ; then he turned her and rattled back toward the village, and stopped before his own lodging. He asked Enfield to hold the horse and went in. In a little while he came out and put a valise in the wagon.

“ What time does the night train pass ?”

“ 12.05.”

He drove to the station, gave Enfield the reins, and put the valise on the platform, then stood on the step of the wagon.

“ Drive the horse to Mitchel’s for me and tell him to send me his bill.”

He lingered a moment, then offered his hand.

“ Good-night, Lawrence !”

“ Good-night !” and they held each other’s hands firmly but gravely.

“ Will you take a cigar now, Lawrence ?”

“ Yes !”

Loramer thrust his cigar-case into his hand, wheeled round and marched into the waiting-room, holding the valise with a strong grasp, and putting his head a little on one side.

That affair was a part of the long, slow process of Enfield’s alienation from Cora, but only one of many steps. He was tenacious and slow to change, and she held him by cords of memory and dependence as well as affection. But by degrees he came to see clearly that he had been wilfully blind, that he had always known but would not regard that she was not at all the girl he had enshrined. The end was but a trifle—the proverbial last straw. And though he laughed when she took him to task and felt a barbarous enjoyment in their reversed relations, and in her show of something like consternation, he more than once afterward felt the yearning of the converted heathen toward his broken gods.

Loramer and Enfield spent a week together on Cape Cod the same summer and took refuge from a storm in one of the huts provided for shipwrecked people. Listening to the deafening roar of the wind and the surf, they spoke of Cora Brainard. Loramer congratulated Lawrence upon his freedom. And he went on :

“I don’t know what there is in the little minx. All the old ladies in Elmtree think her a kind of saint, but she didn’t strike me in that light. She came near making a — fool of me, but I can’t remember anything she said, only how she laughed and her eyes sparkled.”

“I can’t laugh at her,” Enfield answered. “She hasn’t made herself and she hasn’t had a good time. She doesn’t know anything and doesn’t care for anything. She has a wonderful tact, an eye for color, and an instinct for the current fashion in what goes for literature and art. But she has no appreciation of anything permanent and no lasting enjoyment of anything. I think that is terrible. I can’t think of anything much more pitiable.”

Enfield lounged against the wall ; Loramer watched him awhile, listening to the storm booming without, as he lay stretched on the straw. Then he went on :

“Do you think she’s a good girl, Lawrence? It wouldn’t be quite safe for her to run on with some fellows as she did with me.”

He caught Enfield’s eye.

“No, it wasn’t quite safe for her to run on so

with me. She's either very innocent, or very artful, or very reckless, I don't know which. If she is good, she's very, very good."

He laughed, but Lawrence smoked soberly and silent.

"Young Harlow, the ensign, was her last capture, wasn't he?"

Enfield nodded, gravely.

"They say he was over his head, and would have given up the navy and flouted his people and everything, if she would have taken him, but she wouldn't let him sacrifice himself. That was a strange affair of theirs—being lost on a sleigh-ride and snowed up two days across the mountain. I never could understand it; both of them knew the country, and none of the rest of the party found much trouble."

"I don't know," Enfield answered, slowly. "I wasn't taking as much interest in her movements just then as I had been. I cut adrift about the time she took Harlow in tow; I suppose she thought I was jealous, and perhaps I was. I don't know how they managed it, but he left very suddenly, and she was sick about that time."

All these things, and many more, surged through Enfield's mind now, as he stood before her and was swayed by her unrestrained upbraiding. She said that he had stood in her way, that she had put her trust in him and given him such a near place that others had been kept from her. He found

that hard to swallow. He turned from her and threw himself into an arm-chair, with his face away from her, and chewed the bitter accusation.

Finally she came slowly and stood beside him a minute or two, then said sadly, laying her hand on his arm :

“ Forgive me, Lawrence, if I have said too much ; I am in trouble ; you will help me, will you not ? ”

“ Yes, I will do anything I can for you,” he answered. “ Have you made any plans ? ”

She shook her head slowly.

“ No ; I don't know what I am to do. I can't live alone, and there's no one here I can live with. They don't know me and yet think they do, and they expect me to be always playing the character they have invented for me. I'm tired to death, and I want you to tell me what to do.”

He sat with her awhile longer, then went away, and thought of her all night, and went back to her in the morning.

Loramer made him a visit soon after that. They sat up late together. When they were separating at Loramer's door, he laid his arm across Enfield's shoulder, and they looked into each other's eyes.

“ Are you going to marry Cora Brainard, Lawrence ? ” he asked.

“ Yes.”

They continued to look at each other for a long breath.

“ Are my eyes sound ? ” asked Enfield, but neither smiled.

"Yes, sound and true," answered Loramer, "but too deep for me."

The wedding came off a month later. Enfield had insisted upon Loramer standing up with him. "This must make no difference between you and me, Harry," he had said. Cora looked very pretty, and bore herself with a demure dignity which Loramer could not but admire. He got an idea of her then which he found hard to reconcile with his recollections. Enfield himself discovered an unsuspected capacity for enjoyment in her.

They came back from the wedding-journey, and she took command of his house. And as they settled into the routine of home life and occupations, Enfield began to think of carrying out certain plans which he had had in mind.

Two or three months before his return to Cora, he had met a young lady whom he had known slightly for some years, named Stella Grayland. She was not strikingly beautiful, but of very pleasing appearance, fresh, rosy, and intelligent. But the charm Enfield found in her was her manner and what it suggested. Though entirely simple, her walking, standing, sitting, speaking, were perfectly poised. In all her motions and attitudes she made you think of some smooth and balanced mechanism which, however it turned, or went, or stopped, was still in no danger of going awry. She could stand still and sit still, and to see her do either was good for the eyes. She was not fluent in speech, but when she began you might be sure

she would get to the end of what she set out to say and stop when she got to the end. The simplest things took a rhythmical quality in her mouth, and clung to the memory with an agreeable tenacity.

Happy, thoughtful, modest, steadfast Stella Grayland had struck Enfield as the reverse of Cora Brainard, and he found the secret of the salient difference in the fact that Stella had had a thorough training in one direction. Her father was a musician, and his daughter had inherited his faculty and cultivated it by assiduous study at home and abroad. Coming away from her, Enfield had reflected how any ennobling pursuit broadens and deepens the whole character, as a journey up the latitudes on any side of the world gives one the main features of all, and makes the rest intelligible.

If Cora had had the guidance of some strong, wise hand to set her right at the start, and lead her along the arduous beginning of some such path, until her feet found their strength and the growing joy of walking, and her eyes learned the delight of the ever-widening and brightening prospect!—the thought of what might have been filled him with strong regret and pity. She had only had the training of sordid care and uncongenial tasks and associations. He was estranged from her then, and had been thinking hardly of her; but when he heard of her in trouble at her father's death, the pitiful yearning swept away all unkind-

ness, and brought him back to her side. And that night, after she had appealed to him in such an abandoned humor, she seemed to him quite the child still and fit to learn of one who understood her, and had her confidence and the right to be with her a great deal. Who was there that knew her or could help her but he ? It was in no proud spirit that he had answered. He wandered under the stars, and was humble enough and lonely enough, God knew. He went back through the years, and gathered all the forgotten tenderness and trust between them. He felt again the purifying stimulus of his thought of her, and perceived how it had fostered all of him that was brave and of good report. Whether or not he had deceived himself ; whether she were truly the girl he had seen or not, the fact remained that he owed her, or his thought of her, a great deal. What was truth ? Are there not as many worlds as eyes that see them ? Are we sure there is any world outside the eye ? Does not truth consist in standing by what one's eyes report ? What better proof could there be of a thing's reality than that it had held you long, shaped and lifted and led you ? Cora Brainard had been the most powerful modifying circumstance of his life.

It seemed to him that night that God had set before him a solemn trust, and that there was every reason why he should assume it. And slowly and reverently he took it up.

And now that she was his wife, he was anxious

to begin the course he had determined to pursue. Cora had received the ordinary schooling of girls, but had somehow missed the true education. Her acquirements were a surface gloss merely, Enfield knew. She had never been touched by the sacred fire. She could not tell a good book from a poor one, he had said to Loramer. But he had taken her, and his heart yearned toward the companion of his choice. Yet there could be no true companionship where there was no common view or interest. It seemed to him that she had never learned the right use of her eyes, that the few and little things close to her shut out the sight of the great and innumerable company beyond, as if one reared among city streets should never see either the earth or the sky. He would teach her to use them, would show her the awe and beauty of the world. They would read together; he would find a new charm and inspiration in his loved books; she would catch his enthusiasm and insensibly learn the delight and true cultivation of all that is great and good.

He found no chance to begin for a long time. She was very busy and seemed very happy. There was the house to set in order, his friends and hers to entertain; she was learning to ride. But by and by came winter and shut them in more alone. He got out his books and proposed their reading together, and was pleased to find she welcomed the plan. She read with a clear intonation and a careful regard for pointing and pronunciation;

but somehow as he listened to her the strength and flavor of his favorite authors escaped between the words. Her idea of reading poetry seemed to be that it should sound exactly like prose. She had apparently no conception of anything like rhythm, and seemed to think it a special grace to avoid any slightest pause at the end of a line when it could be done ; so that the mind was kept on a strain to catch at the rhyme and measure. He said nothing, but one night took the book himself. He read things to her that had made his heart throb and dimmed his eyes, or filled him with delightful laughter, and they wearied or puzzled her, and seemed cold and sterile to himself. He began to lose courage, but he persevered. One night he read to her in Ruskin's eloquent prose, and came to that powerful and impassioned, if somewhat mystical, interpretation of the Laureate's noble song :

“ Come into the garden, Maud,
For the black bat, night, has flown,
Come into the garden, Maud,
I am here at the gate alone ;
And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
And the musk of the rose is blown.”

He read on to the end. When he stopped he hoped she would not speak ; he felt by anticipation the jar of her clear cold voice. But she did not speak. Her face was in the shadow, but he could see without turning his head that her bosom heaved and

heaved. She was touched,—she understood. With a rush came a thought that the splendid song symbolized their relation. It was he who stood at the gate, alone, and called her out from “the dancers dancing in tune.” He had almost wearied of calling, but she heard,—at last she heard !

“ There has fallen a splendid tear
From the passion-flower at the gate.
She is coming, my dove, my dear ;
She is coming, my life, my fate ;
The red rose cries, ‘ She is near, She is near,’
And the white rose weeps, ‘ She is late ;’
The larkspur listens, ‘ I hear, I hear ;’
And the lily whispers, ‘ I wait ! ’ ”

There was silence a while in the room ; then he moved very gently and looked in her face. There was a smile on her lips, and her eyes were closed. She was asleep.

He left her there and went out. It was cold and still ; the stars glittered, the earth was white. He walked far on the frozen snow, with a feeling as hard and cold as the bitter air. Some impish sprite seemed to mock him with the closing strain of the song :

“ She is coming, my own, my sweet ;
Were it ever so airy a tread,
My heart would hear her and beat,
Were it earth in an earthy bed ;
My dust would hear her and beat,
Had I lain for a century dead ;
Would start and tremble under her feet,
And blossom in purple and red.”

All the charm had gone out of the words. Were such passionate yearnings actual, or at best more than empty delusions? He had yearned so toward her; she had been "his life, his fate." His fate, truly, but was she not rather his death? What kind of creature was it that words like those could not move? She cast a blight upon the noblest things, made him doubt and disbelieve where before he had walked with firm feet. And she was his fate; he was bound to her by his own hand. She sat there now by his table, and there she would sit and sit. The picture made his house seem a prison. He must go back there by and by. The thought of living at variance was very bitter to him, yet how could they prevent it who had nothing in common, whose instincts drew opposite ways. He was unequally yoked with an unbeliever.

The village clock recalled him from that dismal reverie. He had a call to make at the Marlakes'; the children were all three sick. Kate Marlake had been a Grayland, and her sister Stella was recently come to stay with her through that trying time. Lawrence gave one of the children a soothing potion, and said he would wait to see the effect. He went down-stairs, and Kate sent Stella to keep him company. She asked him about the children, and he explained to her the "self-limited" character of the disease and the necessity that they should grow worse before they could be better, but assured her there was no present cause for alarm.

And while he thus reassured her, she was unconsciously exerting a more powerful influence upon him. Her steady, balanced carriage, her quiet, straight, brief questions, her direct glance, her strong but controlled interest, the simple grace with which she sat afterward, altogether affected him with a great tenderness, mingled with despair. Why could not Cora be like that? Was it so hard to be simple, gracious, modestly satisfied? It seemed very easy in Stella's presence. She did not say much; her words were fit and sincere, to be sure, but simple and few, and as like as not to end with a depreciating, low, lapsing laugh. But somehow she made all brave and gentle and generous things seem easy and very desirable. Lawrence looked up from his abstraction and found her watching him.

"Don't you miss your music?" he asked.

"Well," she answered, with her low laugh, "it would hardly be gracious to say I do, when Kate needs me so badly,—and hardly true to say no."

Lawrence recalled a remark of Dr. Kane's;—how when, on one of his voyages, in their ice-girt winter quarters, the whole ship's company, save himself, were prostrate below decks, and he with incredible strength and fortitude was literally doing everything, not even omitting to register regular observations of the instruments;—in the midst of that unsurpassable heroism among the polar solitudes, he felt at night a dissatisfaction

with the day as having been spent to little purpose worthy of his powers.

Stella listened, and was still a moment before she answered :

“ Yes, I can understand that.”

That was it. She could understand. She knew what he was talking about ; she knew and cared. He had always remarked her peculiarly melodious, low voice ; he thought now he had never heard one so expressive. It was never either loud or faint, but exquisitely modulated, like all her motions. He could say things to her ; when he began to talk to Cora, his words came back upon him as in an echoing hall, and smothered him with the sound of his own voice. Stella Grayland, sitting composedly, saying little, stirred him like noble music, —made him strong and fervid.

They talked of many things, the dark background of his thought giving a sombre undertone to his part. They came back to music.

“ You enjoy it as much as ever ?” he asked.

“ Oh, yes,” she answered ; “ I think it grows constantly upon you. One’s deficiencies become painfully clearer, and bad music seems to increase and become more of a trial. But it is a satisfaction to feel that one grows a little, taking the years together ; and it is very pleasant to know that there will always be plenty to learn and enjoy.”

She ended with a little sigh.

He was looking at her, but he only said :

“ Yes.”

Her words exactly expressed his feeling for literature. He felt as if they two had been climbing the same hill by different paths, and stood side by side for a moment looking up to the heights beyond that rose one above another,—where over the dark pine forests the glittering snow-peaks pierced the sky and the rivers of ice shone gloriously.

Kate came to tell them that Jenny was asleep, and they went up softly. Lawrence wrote out his directions for the night and came down, Stella accompanying him. At the door he paused a moment abstractedly.

“Don’t you think it’s a great loss for a person to miss the pleasure and appreciation of a noble art?” he asked, seriously.

She looked at him questioningly, but replied:

“Yes, it makes me very sorry sometimes; it is a great loss. But I reflect that there are a great many people who get on without it, and they seem quite contented and happy. I think those who have the advantage of the finer influences and delights should be very good and try to prevent the younger ones from growing up without caring for such things.”

“Yes, that is true,” he replied, and he went on with suppressed agitation: “But suppose one should grow up blind to all art and yet not contented or happy, without any true knowledge, or faith, or cultivation but the outward seeming, unsettled, unsatisfied, hungering for one knows not what, despising all that one has?”

He leaned back, and neither spoke for a moment. She turned either way with a shuddering movement.

"That would be terrible," she answered. "But do you think there are any so unfortunate?"

"Yes, there are some," he returned; "I hope indeed not many."

"And can nothing be done for them?"

"I don't know. I am afraid not."

"Oh, I think you should not say that," she continued, warmly; "their friends should not despair. It would be like saving a soul from death!"

"Thank you," he said. "Good-night!" He offered his hand, and she gave him hers frankly.

He came away softened and humbled; the night was not so hard and cold now. All that was compassionate and unselfish in him was re-enforced, and the view of his better nature confirmed. His feeling toward Cora was only gentle and pitiful.

But there was a difference between them thenceforth that he could not equalize. He saw that the novelty and excitation of her altered position were going from her and that the quiet of the early winter was growing irksome. She said nothing, but he got the feeling of having a child in the house whose playthings were worn out and whom he felt bound to entertain. It unsettled and fretted him. He was necessarily at the Marlakes' a great deal for some time, and his admiration for Stella grew with the sight of her unwearied and skilful care of the little ones; through the most trying scenes she was steadfast, though deeply con-

cerned ; she executed his directions with exactness. She was never taken at a disadvantage ; under all circumstances she was the same simple, friendly, self-respectful, admirable person. He was always the better for seeing her ; however confused and wrong-sided the world might seem, at sight or sound of her all things fell into order and marched to unheard music. He did not disguise from himself that he went to see the Marlake children oftener than he would have gone to others ; he knew he was glad to go there and knew the reason. He asked himself why he should not. He did not know how he should get on without this resource. His wife soon wore out his better feelings ; sometimes he was in a rage with her, sometimes affected with a great melancholy ; she could not rest at home unless there were people there ; she wanted to be at all meetings, fairs, parties, lectures, concerts. She would talk with most people glibly enough, catching the cue of each with wonderful adroitness and echoing each after his kind. Most people thought her charming when she cared to charm ; to be confirmed in one's opinions by such pretty, vivacious eyes and lips few men would find distasteful. To Lawrence she had nothing to say. She knew that he knew that she had nothing worth saying. She resented his penetration ; she resented his pity ; and pity was the only light in which he found the thought of her tolerable. He had thought to show her through his eyes widening vistas of beauty and grandeur ; and instead

he caught glimpses through hers of awful heights and depths of vacancy, peopled only by thinly veiled phantoms of darkness and horror. But she could not look with his eyes, and if she caught sight of such dismal prospects now and then she could not be expected to want to look that way ; it was as if she sailed with a strong swimmer to whom she instinctively looked for help and succor when storms came, but who could do nothing in fair weather but steer the boat. A cloud or a breaking wave might remind her of tempest and dark depths full of cruel creatures, but while the sun shone and the sea was smooth she could hardly be blamed for preferring merrier company than one who was forever on the lookout for foul weather, and whose gravity and very reserve power of succor were suggestive of distasteful things.

They came to no open rupture ; what was there to say ? His prevailing mood toward her was compassion as for a lost soul. But many times that mood broke down by its own weight. Her light, child-like laugh, her high, clear voice talking so glibly and cheerily to people whom, as like as not, he knew she despised, came to him with a hollow, heartless ring that was maddening. He could not study ; he could think of nothing worthy. He would rush away from the sound that he was frightened to perceive was becoming hateful. And the unconscious influence of Stella was always a steadying and restoring one. He believed he should never have married Cora but for the stimu-

lus to his compassion that he got from her. He did not know what he should do now but for her stimulus of his forbearance, his tenderness, his whole better nature. But the children got well by and by, and Stella went away. Then Enfield stumbled along as best he could.

Some time afterward Lawrence had a letter from a friend : " I have an opening here for a young surgeon of parts and character. It will be the making of some one. Can you send me the name of some young fellow you can recommend ? "

Now, Lawrence happened to know that Stella had a cousin, a young surgeon ; in fact, she had asked him about his chance of success in that part of the country. He now invited young Winlock to come down and make him a visit with a view to recommending him. He was a handsome, lively young fellow, and Lawrence liked him from the first. He and Cora got on well together, and Lawrence found the house pleasanter than he had for a long time.

Stella came back to Elmtree two or three weeks later. Kate had felt the long strain after it was over, and had stumbled and broken down. Stella quickly perceived some things about her cousin that troubled her. One morning he came on some errand, and she detained him. He was a frank fellow, and he and Stella were good friends. She made him come and sit with her. She talked to him and watched him. He took out his watch and rose to go. She stood up before him.

"Eugene," she said, "where are you going, now?"

The tall fellow looked down at her and changed color.

"I am going to ride."

"With Mrs. Enfield?"

"Yes," he answered, doggedly.

She looked away slowly and then back, till their eyes met again. She spoke in a lower voice than usual, but steadily.

"What do you think of Mrs. Enfield?"

He did not turn away his eyes, but his face grew haggard.

"I think she's an angel," he said.

She threw herself into the chair beside her without moving her feet, and sat with her hands together in her lap, and her face bent out of his sight. He turned back, shaken and helpless. Her attitude affected him more than any words. Presently he came round and took her head between his hands.

"Don't fret about me, Stel," he said. "I'm not worth it."

She sat up straight.

"Eugene, you must go away."

He turned away his head.

"I can't," he said.

She stood up.

"Come here a moment."

She led him to Kate's sick-room.

"Awake, Katy? You slept nicely. You feel

better now. Here's Eugene come to see you. I have got to go out, and Lizzie's busy, so Eugene will sit in the next room and call her if you want anything. Good-by, dear !"

She was gone before he could say a word. In fifteen minutes she was in Dr. Enfield's parlor. A riding whip and hat lay on a table. She walked from them to the back of the room. Cora came down in her habit. She had a cheerful greeting on her lips, and advanced toward Stella, but stopped half way ; and Stella backed a step.

"Will you take a seat, Miss Grayland?" Cora said, with cold politeness.

"No," she answered, only half conscious of her words, a burning shame and aversion enveloping her like a cloud and shutting out sight and sound. "I have come to tell you that my cousin is not going to ride—and—"

Cora was staring with a horrified expression past Stella's head. She interrupted :

"That will do, Miss Grayland. Lawrence, you had better come in."

Stella turned. The door behind her into Lawrence's office stood open ; he had come in unheard, and was leaning against the door-post, white in the face. Stella was startled, but she only bowed distantly and came out of the house. This was not altogether new to Lawrence ; he had felt vaguely fearful before. Cora turned her back to him and looked out of the window ; the prospect was sunny and bright with spring's promise, but

it did not look so to her. He came forward and stood beside her.

"So you are at the old game again," he said. "What do you suppose will be the end if you keep on?"

She answered without turning or lifting her head, and in a hard bitter voice :

"You are both jealous. And it does not become you who wore such a long face because she went away. I suppose you can see now that she cares more for some one else."

She caught sight of his face, and would have slipped past him, but he stood before her. Then she was afraid. He was afraid of himself ; he had to keep back his hands from taking hold of her.

"Do not ever speak to me like that again," he said, slowly, after a little. "You are not fit—" but he broke off, and left her abruptly.

Stella sent Eugene away the same evening. After that she avoided Lawrence ; there was something abhorrent to all her instincts in meeting him now with that repulsive understanding between them. And, for his part, that detestable suggestion of Cora's put upon Enfield a kindred restraint and at the same time gave him the key to Stella's feeling, so that her influence upon him was rather strengthened than otherwise by the reserve which came between them.

Enfield wrote to his medical friend soon afterward, recommending young Winlock to his favor-

able notice ; and in due time an arrangement was made to the young surgeon's advantage. When Stella knew that the affair was pleasantly completed, she took the first opportunity to thank Enfield frankly and warmly. And the warmth he brought away from the brief interview was one that helped him to be gentle and forbearing at home and altogether true ; and it did not cease to help him when Kate Marlake got up again and he saw Stella less and less often, nor even when, by and by, she went away South again.

Months passed by and made a heavy drain on all his resources. He found life hard to endure. One day, when it seemed quite intolerable and he was casting vainly about, his heart went out to his old friend Loramer. He went to see him. The grip and smile of the fellow warmed him like wine. They spent the day together. He brought Loramer home with him. They sat, walked, rode, talked together by day and by night, and were happy. They said nothing about Cora, but thought many things. The little that Loramer saw of her, he chaffed and made merry. One day, looking for Lawrence, he found him out, and Cora alone. She bade him come and sit down, and began a chat, but he would only laugh and answer quizzingly, working cat's cradles with her worsted and big needles. She grew silent under his banter, eying him furtively and stitching away with her head bent. After a while he held a comical figure before her face. She could not help joining in his

laugh, but she stopped short, and began to sob and cry. She stood up, letting her work go where it would.

"You've no business to laugh at me, Harry Loramer," she complained. "You and Lawrence are chatting and laughing all day and all night, and have no more regard for my feelings than if I were wood or stone."

She hid her face, and went out sobbing. Loramer laughed less after that. Lawrence had to take a long ride, and Loramer proposed they should all go together. He and Cora rode on a little way while Lawrence made his call. They rode together every day after that, but Lawrence could not always be one of the party.

Naturally, Lawrence and Loramer found less to talk about, and sat less together. When his time came, Lawrence did not press Loramer to stay, but he did not go. Three days later Lawrence came home and met Loramer coming out of the house. Their greeting was brief and cold. Lawrence went in and found Cora.

He could not speak at first.

"What deviltry are you at now?" he demanded.

She tried to pass out, but he took hold of her by the shoulders, and made her hear.

"Listen to me," he said. "Do you know what you are doing? If you have no shame or pity, have you no fear? Don't try me too far, I tell you it's not safe."

His grasp hurt her cruelly, but she kept her head away, and made no sound.

Two hours later, Lawrence came home again and found no one in his house. He had a call to make to the west. Three miles out he turned into a bridle-path that led up to a height. Presently he came in sight of the top. The shadows were thick about him, but above the sunset flushed splendidly. On the crest sat two riders, close together. He bowed his head and rode away.

"Harry, you are a coward!" Cora was saying. "Oh, I wish I were a man!" She raised her arm with a passionate gesture. "We loved each other from the first, and he drove you away. I never cared for him; I had to marry him. And I tell you we live in misery. We are nothing but a torment to each other. And you do not know him. He is in love with another woman, and he is cruel. Look here!"

She threw back her mantle and slid her supple shoulder out of her dress.

"Those are the marks of his fingers!"

His gaze was bent upon her, his eyes seemed drawn beyond his control; he trembled, and caught his breath. But he broke the spell. He sat up. He found his voice, thick and low:

"Don't tempt me. I am his friend; you are his wife."

She looked to right and left, then turned and took hold of his arm.

"Listen to me!" she commanded. "Bend

down your head,—lower, lower !” She looked in his face intently ; she put her own close and said, “ I am not his wife !”

A dumb, incredulous stare was his reply. He frowned and shook his head.

“ You don’t believe me ?” she cried. “ Come home, I will show you.”

She turned her horse, struck him with the whip, and plunged recklessly down the steep path. He could not overtake her till she reined up and walked through the village street.

“ Go into the parlor,” she said, “ and wait till I come.”

She ran up-stairs. She asked for Lawrence. He was out,—would not be back till eight. She looked at her watch. Not quite seven. From a locked drawer she took a locked jewel-box and from under the lining a written paper with a printed slip pinned to it.

She came down and into the parlor with her hand in her pocket, walked up to Loramer where he stood before the fire, gave him the paper, and sat down to watch him. It was a certificate of marriage between Cora Brainard and Clarence A. Harlow, dated three years back, and signed by an eccentric clergyman, across the mountain. A feeling of sickness came over Loramer.

“ Then you are Harlow’s wife,” he said.

“ No, I am no man’s wife,” she answered, impatiently. “ Read on ; read the newspaper slip.”

He read : “ On board U. S. S. ‘ Tuscaloosa,’ off

Cherbourg, Oct. 20th, Ensign Clarence A. Harlow, aged twenty-four, by the bursting of a gun."

As Loramer lifted his eyes the door opened and Lawrence came in. Cora uttered a low cry and reached for the paper, but Lawrence's look frightened her so that she fell back into her chair. He kept his eyes upon her, but went toward Loramer and reached out a cigar-case which he brought in his hand.

"Here's your cigar-case," he said. "You'd better take it back."

Loramer swore at the case, and flung it into the fire.

"Look here!" he cried. "Read that." He thrust it before his face. "Go on! Do you see? She was his wife when she married you. You're a free man!"

A brutal exultation seized Lawrence. He shouted and laughed,—“Ha ha, ha ha ha! She's made fools of us both. You can have her, Harry, and welcome. I wish you joy. Ha ha, ha ha ha! She's the devil! she's the devil!"

Loramer answered with harsh and scornful hilarity. Neither took any other notice of her sitting there, sunken together, crushed, hiding her face with her hands. Loramer turned away and ran tramping up the stairs, crammed his things into his valise, and came tramping down. Lawrence was backed against the post at the stair-foot. Loramer grasped his arm in passing. "By-bye! Come and see us," he called. He went out and

banged the door, and they heard his hoarse laughter far down the quiet street.

To Cora that laughter sounded like the knell at the end of all things. She sat as they had left her, and did not move for a long while after Lawrence too had gone out.

Lawrence's mirthful humor passed very quickly. He grew full of a most delectable sense of freedom. It seemed as if a suffocating network had been tightening about his heart and, now that it had burst, the joy of the great and unexpected deliverance was more than his breast could hold. He could not breathe in-doors,—he wanted all the air he could get on the windy hills.

He had been true ; he had been true, he cried out to himself—in thought and deed he had been true ! He tried to think : he could not think nor reason. A flood that he had never acknowledged, that he had hardly suspected, that he had set all his faculties to dam up and wall over, had been suddenly let loose and overwhelmed him. He could see no law or order in the world but in one place ; to that place he must go, for light, for understanding !

And his heart, like a bird set free,
That tarries not early or late,
But flies, over land, over sea,
Straight, straight to its home, to its mate !

All the night seemed to break out and sing. All the world yearned one way ; the stars leaned out

of their courses and looked, not at him, but south ; the north wind went by him, crooning, hurrying, and the moon sailed southward past the ragged clouds. All his soul went out with them, and his body sickened to follow.

He came home and changed his dress. It was late. He lighted no lamp ; the ghostly moonlight streamed through the window, and a figure as still and ghost-like stood at the door.

“Lawrence ! Lawrence !” she called, despairingly. But he did not seem to hear. He felt no hardness toward her ; she had brought him the great deliverance as well as the grievous bondage. But he could no more heed her now than turn back if he were drawn by unbridled horses and some one cried behind. But when at last he came to go out, he almost stumbled upon her lying across the door. He stooped and picked her up ; she was as cold as stone. She clung about his neck. The tempest had come ; her ship was a wreck, the dark waves tumbling about her and dashing her with their salt spray. She clung to the strong swimmer she had flouted when winds were sweet, but was afraid she came too late.

“I could not help it ; he deserted me basely. Oh, Lawrence, do not cast me off !” she implored. “Do not go away. Pity me ; I am very miserable. I should not have done that if you had not forsaken me. No one ever helped me but you, and I have not been happy, you know I have not. I do not know what will become of me if you put me

away. I won't vex you any more ; before God I will not ! You have me at your mercy ; will you not be merciful ?"

He laid her on the bed and wrapped her up. He spoke in a deep, solemn voice :

"Be still. I cannot hear you to-night. I have been merciful. I will try to do what is right. I am going away now ; wait till I come back."

He took the midnight train south. Stella was out of town. He followed her. He felt that he could not meet her before strangers with self-control, or go through formalities. He wrote a brief note at the hotel asking to see her alone. Then he shrank from the thought of meeting her with detestable things to explain, and he added :

"I should like you to know my altered position before we meet. I shrink from shocking you by a personal explanation painful to us both. Forgive me, then, for inclosing papers which will inform you."

The messenger brought back a note which showed marks of agitation :

"Please excuse me to-night. I will walk on the beach early in the morning."

As the sun came up out of the sea, and he turned away from watching the splendid vision, he saw one that affected him more. She stood a little way off, looking intently seaward ; and the morning took a new grace from the flush on her cheek and the light in her clear, calm eyes. His eyes grew dim as he looked at her. If she had felt any

agitation, it was gone when she turned and waited for him to approach. She gave him her hand.

"Is it not a beautiful morning?" she said. "Don't you think it should make us very gentle and unselfish?"

The falling cadence of her voice was more musical than the waves that babbled at her feet. They walked side by side along the sands.

"Yes," he answered, "yes. If all mornings were like this——" he broke off and looked out to sea.

They came among scattered bowlders, and stood still. With diffidence she took out of his letter the paper with the printed slip attached, and gave it to him.

"You were not offended at my sending them?"

"No, I was glad you sent them. It was thoughtful of you." She spoke low and seriously. "But do I quite understand?"

She asked him several questions, modest but straightforward, with her grave eyes on his face. While he answered he was thinking, "To the pure, all things are pure."

She dropped her eyes and sighed.

"It is a dreadful story; it makes me very sad."

Then after a minute she looked up again and asked:

"What are you going to do?"

He shook with vague apprehension, and leaned sidewise on the rock.

"With her?" he asked. "I hardly know. I

thought you would advise me. You cannot think I am under obligation to keep her any longer? I am not bound to her by any law."

She did not answer for a minute or look at him. When she did, there was a strong fervor in her voice :

" We are all bound ; we are all under obligation to help, to guard, to seek and to save them that are lost."

She stood before him. Her face was like the face of the angel of pity, her tones full of passionate pleading.

" Did you take her ignorantly? Have you kept her only because the law made you? I know you better. What will become of her if you cast her off? She might be worse than she is."

She turned away and shuddered. Her words pierced him the deeper because they were the same Cora had used, because they were his own smothered thoughts.

He was silent, leaning against a great rock as he stood before her, and she went on, with rising passion :

" And beware for your own sake. If you throw her off, she will draw you down with her, you and all—" she caught her breath—" all connected with you. You cannot punish her as a criminal. What could you say to justify your action? Think of the position you would stand in before the world, with your tongue tied. You could not bear it. In your heat you may think you could, but you

might as well think to resist the sea. Beware lest in your haste you throw away the good you have gained. For you have gained. Your power over her is multiplied tenfold. Your freedom is your power. She must know she is in your hands now ; the fences are all down. She will know she can no longer presume ; her instincts of self-preservation will weigh on your side, and your forbearance be a perpetual restraint upon her. I think you have no good alternative, and that your duty is plain. Don't think I am hard ; we have all our tasks that seem too heavy at times. We can't understand ; ' His ways are past finding out. ' "

Her voice grew tremulous, and she held her face away a minute or two, but then looked up and smiled faintly :

" ' Theirs not to make reply ; theirs not to reason why. ' Who knows what great things you may accomplish yet ? "

All his sense went with her, down in some unseen depth ; but above that rolled a stream whose waves bore him past all resistance. And now the billows swept over him and were bitter in his eyes and throat. He bent backward and rested his head upon the high rock, and stretched up his arms above him. The freshness of the morning turned to ashy pallor ; the land and the sea sickened with pain.

Slowly he bent forward again :

" All that is true, I have no doubt. You have

clear eyes, and some day I may see it so myself. But I can't see, I can't hear that now. There is only one thing I can see or hear. I disowned it, I put it away, I crushed it down ; I was faithful to the galling bond ; I did my duty !"

He raised his arms again ; his voice was like a cry to heaven :

"She made my love her plaything ; she wore it out with base uses. She has used me spitefully ; she has been the curse of my life !"

And the low answer came back steadfastly :

" ' Bless them that curse you ; do good to them that spitefully use you ! ' You say you have done your duty ; I know you have. Cleave fast to that. Take care, lest you have not that to say by and by."

Her voice faltered ; there was a look of repressed tears about her drooped eyes. She had plainly been over the first part of this path before, but she was getting on untrodden ground.

"Duty is the principal thing ; there is always some sweetness sooner or later with that ; but without it, the best things will turn to ashes and dust."

"I know, I know," he cried. "But I can't feel that now. I can only feel one thing ; I can only care for one thing. I only know that there is but one person in all the world for me, and that duty, and reason, and heaven itself, mean nothing beside her. And it is like death to hear her say these things to me, and to know that she could not say them if she cared for me as I do for her."

He thought her as steady as the rocks, and to her the solid earth seemed to heave round her more than the unstable sea. But she steadied herself and replied :

“ Ought you not to be glad if it is not so ? It would not alter your duty. Would it not make it the harder for you ? Would it not make your way darker than it is ? ”

“ Glad ! ” he called out, despairingly. “ Glad that the sun is put out in the sky ; that the earth is a desert and my heart an intolerable pang ; that there is no more purpose, or spring, or desire in my life ! Oh, yes, I am glad, glad ! You can’t know what you say ! ”

She clasped her hands ; she laid her shoulder and face against the rock ; she spoke bitterly :

“ Oh, do not try me so. Do you suppose there is nothing hard for me also ? Yes, I know ; I know ! ”

He bent toward her, but a horrible doubt seized him. He clasped his hands behind his head ; he swung from side to side.

“ For another ? Not for me ? ” he demanded, hoarsely.

She stood unsteadily ; she lifted her joined hands ; her upturned face was aflame, but she could not speak. Then her self-repression broke down. She sank upon the rock and covered her face, and wept uncontrollably. He threw himself beside her.

“ Oh, is it true ? ” he besought her. “ Can it be true ? ”

"Yes!—yes!" she cried, sobbing vehemently. "I tried to keep it down; I would not hear it. I tried to do right. But I can't help it now."

He turned his face up to the sky and groaned. "O God!" It was as if heaven came within his reach, and resistless hands stretched out and held him back. But it was too much. Fierce joy rushed upon him and swept away everything else. He stretched out his arms; he bowed over her; he caught her and held her fast. The sun leaped up in the sky. The waves and the winds sang together. There was a new heaven and a new earth! "O Stella!" was all he said.

She lay still; she had no strength. But soon she found faint voice:

"O Lawrence, I am so weak! You must help me to do right."

"Help you!" he cried, piteously. "Help the angels of light! O Stella, Stella! Don't trust in me. I have no goodness but yours, no right but you. I had rather the tide would rise over us here, than have to go away from you."

She sobbed, then turned her head with a long, long breath, and slowly, steadily, with weak, limp fingers began to loosen his clasp and raise herself up. He let her go. The world seemed slipping from him; the shadows of night fell about him. They sat side by side and looked at each other.

"Is there no way?" he asked.

"No,—no way but one."

She tried to stanch her tears, but they would flow.

“Don't cry, don't cry !” he besought. “I can't bear that.”

“Oh, never mind,” she replied. “It's a relief to cry ; I am not altogether unhappy. It is very bitter at first, and chokes me.”

She bowed her face a moment, then lifted it and went on, with the tears in her eyes and voice :

“No ; there is only one way. Even if it were easier, I could not thrust her out, I should hate myself if I did ; you yourself would despise me. If we could enter heaven by shutting the door upon her, could we be happy walking together in the golden streets ? Would not the thought of her wandering in outer darkness come in and torment us and make us afraid ? I do not grudge her, —at least, at least——” Her voice faltered, but rose again. “I ought not. I do pity her with all my heart. If I should take away the only good she has, would it not turn to my curse ?”

They had risen and stood on the sand. His eyes were bent upon her ; her words played on him like the winds on a harp.

“Do right ; do right ?” he exclaimed. “Whatever you do or say is right to me.”

Her head dropped. She lifted her hands ; she spoke brokenly.

“Do not speak so ; help me ; I am weak too.”

He caught her hands.

“Forgive me,—I will, I will, I know I could die for you. Can I not live and endure for your sake ? Look up ! look up.”

She looked up and smiled through tears. He held her hands fast, she stepped upon the low rock and stood upon his level.

“Why should we mourn?” she cried. “Have we not the best things?”

Her eyes turned from him and looked out across the sea. And her thoughts went on beyond sea, and land, and sun. But he could only look at her.

And presently her eyes came back to his. They looked in each other's faces long, but did not speak.

Then slowly, slowly and bitterly they drew their eyes away and set their unwilling faces toward the north; and lingering, step by step, they came side by side along the sands again, parted, and went their allotted, divided ways.

THE IMAGE OF SAN DONATO.

BY VIRGINIA W. JOHNSON.

I.

“Buy the respect of the insolent.”—*Turkish Proverb.*

DOWN in the old Trastevere quarter of Rome the festa of St. Cecilia was being celebrated in her church and convent.

The day was in harmony with the memory of the noble Roman lady—a sky serenely blue, sunshine on fountain and temple ruin, the atmosphere golden with autumn's richness of coloring. The adjacent narrow streets were deserted, swept by one of those waves of popular impulse so characteristic of Italian cities; files of priestly students from the colleges passed through the gateway, this band clad in black, that one in scarlet or purple, and formed lines of wavering color in their transi-

tion across the court to the shadowy portico, flanked by the high, grim, convent wall—that modern reading of St. Cecilia’s martyrdom. High above the surging crowd of devotees and beggars the campanile soared into the sunny air, outlined against that azure Roman sky, and sent forth its tinkling peal of summons to vespers, like the silvery intonation of a benediction.

Two strangers entered the gate, the elder sombre and quiet, the younger eager and delighted by the spectacle. Their respective positions were apparent at a glance. Mademoiselle Durand, in her neat black dress, with her thin sallow face and repressed expression, was a French governess; the young American girl beside her, richly attired in blue velvet, was her charge.

“I am a Cecilia, although far from a saint,” said the latter, gayly. “Ah! how one loves to hear about her—the beautiful martyr of Raphael’s pictures! Do you believe she is now singing among the heavenly choirs up there, mademoiselle?” She paused a moment to gaze at the sky, the sun-bathed campanile, with a wistfulness not unfamiliar to her companion, and which she attributed to an imaginative childhood. “Perhaps the evening bells of Rome are the echoes of her voice in another world,” she added, musingly.

“Come,” said mademoiselle, dryly.

“When I am grown up perhaps I will build a convent of St. Cecilia in America with my own money,” continued the girl, meditatively.

Mademoiselle's eyes sparkled ; she caressed the hand within her arm.

“ Chère enfant ! But I forget ; it is not your faith.”

“ My faith ? I always go to mass with you ; I am not only devout, *je suis bigote*,” rejoined her pupil.

Then they entered the church. St. Cecilia's statue, wrought in purest marble, lay revealed beneath the altar on this one day of the year, when her crypt in the catacomb also blooms with flowers. Transfigured by the radiance of silver lamps and myriads of tapers, enshrined in garlands of roses, veiled in clouds of incense, the statue in its niche lent a charm to the gaudy ornaments of the high altar, and all the tinsel draperies extending from column to column along the aisle. On the right a star of light was visible in the miraculous bath-room, with its dim frescoes and ancient pillars ; the nuns flitted behind the lattice of their gallery.

Mademoiselle, a devout Catholic, knelt at different shrines. Her pupil also knelt. The music, the chant, the glow of those gilded and crimson draperies overhead, seen through the wreaths of incense, all blended. She closed her eyes. She also must pray. For what boon ? She smiled suddenly as she murmured :

“ O God, please send my papa to Rome for Christmas-day.”

Then she rose to her feet, threaded her way

among the ranks of kneeling students, and mademoiselle found her in the court thrusting money into the hands of a group of little boys, the true Trasteverini, with large, liquid eyes.

"We shall be late, I fear," admonished the governess, as they finally quitted the church.

The young girl, Cecilia Denvil, had insisted on walking to this particular sanctuary in the Trastevere quarter instead of on the Pincian Hill. She was both winning and perverse.

At an angle of the crooked streets the window of a shop attracted her attention. Instantly the shrine of St. Cecilia, with its flowers and silver lamps, vanished from her mind. The shop was a mere niche in an old palace wall, brimming over, as it were, into the street, with such odds and ends as a bit of tapestry, a dark picture, a heap of ancient books, a tray of coins and medals, an idol fashioned by Chinese skill.

"What is it?" cried Cecilia.

"Only an image," replied mademoiselle.

The object of Cecilia's interest was a figure on a bracket in the shop window. She darted into the shop, her governess following with a patient smile. What harm could result from her pupil's chatting with the old shop-keeper clad in shabby black, with a rusty satin stock about his neck, and a face tinged yellow by age, as were those of the dilapidated marble busts ranged above his head in the obscurity of the shop? Ay, what harm indeed, mademoiselle? If one could read futurity!

The old man, without surprise at the advent of a young girl in blue velvet, took down the image, and explained to her its history in his slow, musical, Roman tongue. Even mademoiselle lent an ear of unwilling fascination to the tale. The little wooden figure, a foot in height, was San Donato. Behold, signorina mia, the beauty of the face, the robes tinted a soft rose, with ample gold margin, the aureole and palm of martyrdom in the hand. In the great Demidoff villa of San Donato a patron saint was placed in a niche above the portal of certain suites of apartments, as guardian spirit, by the builder. That brought good luck. The Russian prince is dead, signorina, and the nephew heir cast out the saints with quantities of other valuables for sale. For this reason poor San Donato, patron of the whole place, is now perched on a shelf in a little shop at Rome.

Cecilia listened with sparkling eyes, and her head a trifle on one side.

"San Donato shall be my saint," she cried, extending her hands. "Two hundred francs? I have more in my purse. You need not frown, mademoiselle; it is my pocket-money from my papa in America, to spend as I choose. Good-by, signor; I will come to see you again some time."

The old shopkeeper looked after her a moment, then drew from under a chair a repast of dry bread and an onion, interrupted by the purchaser.

"After all, San Donato might have brought me luck had I kept him longer," he muttered, drain-

ing the little flask of wine as he sat on the doorstep, and musing with that curious mixture of avarice and regret at losing a treasure peculiar to the connoisseur.

San Donato was carried along the street by his happy possessor somewhat in the fashion of a new doll. Mademoiselle hid his light under a bushel by laying a fold of shawl over his head and aureole. Cecilia's fancy was captivated by his history even more than by his pensive face and gorgeous robes. San Donato, deposed from his lofty estate in the palace of a Russian prince, should preside as guardian spirit of her home. The image was invested with the gifts of the good fairy as much as he embodied any religious symbol. *His mission was to avert evil.* The saint passed to a new shrine without attendant priests, acolytes, and banners, the swinging of censers, the tinkling of bells, as in the fine old days before Rome was a modern European capital. It was not even borne aloft on sailors' shoulders, like the silver statue of Our Lady at Marseilles, or the miracle-working black Madonna of Montenero at Leghorn. Instead, San Donato moved under the arm of a young girl, muffled in a shawl, skirting the bridge, the quay, the square, now in sunshine, now in shadow, and finally gained the Piazza di SS. Apostoli. Here he was conducted across a court adorned with mouldy statues, and vanished up a broad stairway.

On the third story of the palazzo, shorn of its former papal glories, and yet not degenerated to

shabbiness, a door bore the card of Mrs. Henry Denvil. Governess and pupil entered this apartment, and each sought her respective chamber. Cecilia tossed aside her hat, placed the image on the table, and, resting her chin on her hand, gazed at it steadfastly. San Donato, with his aureole glistening, and holding his palm branch, seemed to return her scrutiny mildly—even to interpret her thought. She had never possessed a confidante other than a company of dolls, now banished as too juvenile companions. “Do you see how it will be?” she said aloud to the image. “You shall be placed in the salon, and look down on us all. Nobody will ever banish you again to a dirty little shop. Perhaps my papa will come over for Christmas. Do not tell—I begged him to come in my last letter after mademoiselle had corrected. I do not spell very well in English, you know, while Jack has forgotten it altogether, mamma says. Jack is at school in Switzerland, and I have not seen him for two years. He is my brother.”

She took up her saint again, and went along the corridor. Her head was erect, and a soft smile played about her mouth. She peeped into the salon, drew back, reflected a moment, and entered. This salon possessed the charm for her of forbidden ground. She was rigidly banished from it by her mother, who received here much company. Hence the delight of seeking some niche up high, where San Donato could be placed. Possibly a gay lady would peer at him through her lorgnette,

and inquire, "Pray, my dear Mrs. Denvil, where did you get that little statue?"

Mamma would seek *her* lorgnette, and reply: "A little statue? I rent the apartment, furnished, of Monsignor N——. The count may know."

Clearly, San Donato deserved a place of honor, and the salon alone was sufficiently good for him. Cecilia traversed the room slowly, seeking a shrine. The place was dark and silent; draperies of sombre damask shrouded the windows and doorways; chandeliers of Venetian glass swayed down from the vaulted ceiling like garlands of pale, frozen flowers; the floor was of polished, inlaid woods; the bronze and green tints of the wall were relieved by gilded cornices and columns bearing the shield of the count's ancestors. All was stately, impressive, if a trifle tarnished; and the effect of patrician elegance, everywhere apparent, was heightened by an occasional portrait—a Martellini in cavalier hat, with an angel bearing heavenward the family emblem, a hammer; a Martellini as a nun, with long, pale fingers clasped over a rosary.

Cecilia had not completed her survey when she was startled by the tinkle of a bell and the approach of visitors. One glance assured her that egress by means of the door was cut off. She darted behind a sofa in the corner beside the window. Here she crouched on the floor, holding San Donato in her arms, and laughed silently. She did not fear to confront these guests. Who then? She

dreaded the flash of her own mother's eye. Yes, indeed, her pretty mamma had ceased to love her, banished her more and more from her presence, made sharp or dry responses to her prattle. Cecilia sighed inaudibly as she crouched there. Hark ! The visitors approached the window ; she could touch one by extending her arm from her hiding-place. Who were they ? Oh, some of her mamma's gentlemen friends lounging in for an afternoon call. They spoke in a low, rapid tone, and their conversation only reached her because of her propinquity.

Birds of prey sometimes pass over the blooming valleys, the waving grain sown with wild flowers, the dove-cote beneath the cottage eaves, uttering their harsh, discordant cries while on the wing.

The English voice, hoarse and deep : " It promises to be a slow season—awfully dull. No English coming out this year, I hear. Have you recently made the acquaintance of—la belle Américaine ? "

The French voice, clear and crisp in utterance : " Yes, last week, at the Spanish Embassy. She is really chic, mon ami. "

The English voice : " Her dinners are not at all bad. Lots of money, you know, and the count manages the whole establishment, from renting her the apartment of his uncle the Monsignor N—to selecting the governess of the daughter and the *chef*. Ha ! ha ! ha ! "

The French voice : " Ah, the Count Martellini !

And monsieur the husband is at home in America making the money, I suppose. Mon Dieu ! how those men over yonder trust their wives ! A charming arrangement for the count."

The English voice : " Have you heard the latest rumor ? They are actually going off together to the Nile after Christmas. A party is proposed, and that sort of thing, but every one knows that it will result in a dahabéeh to the cataract. Vive l'amour ! "

The French voice, changing to a louder key : " Ah, madame is looking so charming to-day ! "

Then a soft rustling of silken draperies over the polished floor announced the entrance of Mrs. Denvil, amiable greetings were exchanged, and the gentlemen became deferential and courteous in manner. Buy the respect of the insolent, by all means !

All the same, two birds of prey had wheeled in heavy and sluggish flight over the valley where the grain ripened and the poppies bloomed, uttering their discordant, mocking cry.

Cecilia crouched behind the sofa, bewildered and astonished. What did they mean ? She grew hot and cold, her heart throbbed violently, she clinched her little hand. Why had these wicked creatures come here to sing their dreary duet ? How their tone changed when the hostess appeared ! She experienced the swift, intense indignation of youth at hypocrisy, ignorant that these voices would sound the same notes in every house

to which they gained admission, after the manner of society. Instinct taught her they alluded to her own mother, before the allusion to the Nile voyage, of which she had already heard. Her mamma and the count were going, with some friends, up the Nile after Christmas. Why might not she go also? Her lips quivered resentfully. Only that morning she had found the count in the aviary, petting the birds; she had wound her arms about his neck, and said, "Oh, how beautiful you are! When I have grown as tall and handsome as a woman can be I shall marry you."

The count had showered kisses on her fair hair, and pinched her cheek in his caressing way.

"We need not wait long, carina," he had replied.

Then mamma had appeared on the threshold, a bright spot on each cheek, and that new flash in her eye.

"You are too old for such nonsense, Cecilia. Go back to mademoiselle directly," she had said, in her dry tones.

Cecilia had departed, crest-fallen, mortified, with some vague remembrance of a father who had not thus dismissed her. To be sure, the count had sent her, later in the day, a gift of bonbons as atonement for mamma's snubbing—one of those white satin boots, mounted on a gilded rink skate, from Spillman's, in the Via Condotti. *He* was never cross, only a big playfellow, all amiability, little clever tricks, frolic, easily tyrannized over,

and serenely content to spin balls or sift cards all day long for a child's amusement. They had known him two or three years ; he was their oldest friend abroad ; he came and went at all hours. The count was a great gentleman, too, of princely lineage, easy, graceful, and elegant. How kind he was to interest himself in the Denvils, when they were strangers in a foreign land ! The young girl had ample leisure for these reflections in her hiding-place. She whispered to the image, demanding what it thought of these croakers. The world was so beautiful, and people so kind. Then the two visitors were replaced by a bevy of ladies, and amid the rustlings of more silken draperies on the floor and the taps of heeled shoes, Cecilia heard her mother exclaim :

“What a horrid man ! I am always relieved when he departs, and yet one meets him everywhere. He told me that frightful scandal about Lady B—— (and no doubt it is true, unfortunately) as if he enjoyed the recital.”

A moment before Mrs. Denvil had said :

“Going so soon, Major Kettledrum ? I am always delighted to see you.”

Now the sofa creaked beneath the weight of two dowagers.

“How soon they lose their republican simplicity over here !” said one, sipping a cup of tea.

“Oh, and they say the husband in America would not be presentable—a common sort of man ; a carpenter, I believe,” retorted the other.

"Hush ! A little more sugar, dear Mrs. Denvil. Thanks."

Finally the rustling of dresses and murmur of voices ceased ; Cecilia crept out of her retreat unperceived. She no longer sought a niche for San Donato in the salon. It seemed to her that the statue did not belong there. Mademoiselle had a headache ; Cecilia ate her supper alone. Heaven had given her the precious gift of a thoughtful consideration for others. She took her own cologne flask to mademoiselle's room and bathed the sufferer's temples.

"Mademoiselle, did St. Cecilia despise the world ?"

"Surely. She was a holy woman."

"Are there any living like her now ?"

"God knows," said mademoiselle, with a little bitterness.

Cecilia kissed her governess, and closed the door softly. Her mood was a strange one. She no longer feared her mother. Something had escaped from her nature, as if she had been touched by fire. It was that subtle, perishable essence of being—childhood.

"I will play that I am a ghost, and walk through all the rooms," she said to herself.

Mrs. Denvil found her standing in her dressing-room, calmly regarding her, as she made her toilet for a ball at the Quirinal Palace.

"Why are you not in bed ? It is ten o'clock," she said.

Cecilia made no reply. She was gazing at the picture reflected in the cheval-glass of a very pretty woman in cream-tinted satin robe scarcely retained on her dimpled shoulders by a strap, diamonds and pearls twinkling about her throat and in her hair. The face of the mother, round, soft, with small weak chin and bright eyes, appeared more youthful than that of her child at the moment. The dressing-room was littered with a rainbow of colors, wraps, dresses, cashmere, laces, and jewelry. It smelled of mingled perfumes and singed hair. Beauty, the poodle, lay coiled up in a tiny white ball on a velvet cushion. How fashionable had Mrs. Denvil become ! She never drove out or received company without Beauty tucked under her left arm. At length the daughter inquired, in an odd, abrupt way : " Is it very delightful to attend so many balls ? "

Mrs. Denvil laughed nervously and adjusted a bracelet.

" I attend very few balls, my dear. You will like the dancing, I dare say, when you come out as a young lady." Her tone was propitiatory, even deprecating.

Cecilia did not smile.

" Why does not papa live here with us ? " she pursued, steadily, after a pause.

Mrs. Denvil was a weak woman ; she moved uneasily, then took refuge in maternal dignity.

" I am in Europe to educate Jack and yourself. Papa and I make the sacrifice of being separated for

your good, and that you may acquire the foreign languages," she explained, in an injured tone.

Cecilia's eyebrows contracted.

"Are there no good schools or governesses, then, in America?"

"Go to bed, you impertinent child!" said Mrs. Denvil, sharply.

She was ruffled, embarrassed, strangely disturbed, by the curious scrutiny of her daughter. She would have kissed her but for that last question. Really it was too much to be asked if there were no schools in America! She gave Cecilia a little tap with her fan, and floated away, a lovely vision of glistening satin and jewels, enveloped in an opera cloak, to be presented to the Princess Margherita.

The self-elected ghost was free to roam through the whole apartment, to shed a few tears, and finally return to the small chamber containing San Donato. She had intended to tell her mother about the image, but the confidence had remained frozen on her lips. She did not go to bed. She was lonely, miserable, and disquieted. What would her mother have said if she knew of the hiding behind the sofa in the salon? Cecilia now rested her arms on the table, and gazed at the little wooden figure. Never had any toy possessed equal interest to her.

Suddenly a great light filled the room, and San Donato vanished. She searched for the lost treasure in dismay, and beheld him enter the door. O, great and glorious San Donato! O, serene and

holy San Donato ! spurning the guise of the old shop, a thing of wood, and appearing to a lonely, neglected child as a swift, strong angel, with unfolded wings, in all thy wondrous celestial beauty ! Cecilia fell on her knees, not daring to lift her eyes to the golden pinions, the head crowned with its aureole of martyrdom ; but the glorious shape raised her, the door and walls of her chamber vanished, and with a giddy rush through the dark night, which deprived her of breath, she found herself standing on a globe, a world, upheld by her guardian, as the soul stands in Guido Reni's picture of the Capitol. Her raiment was also white and glistening ; great pearls clasped her throat and wrists. She was gravely chidden for touching these in wonder, and then she saw other shapes, resembling San Donato, passing rank behind rank in the clouds.

" These through great affliction came, but they never swerved from duty. Are you afraid ?" His voice was like the chimes up in St. Cecilia's campanile ringing for vespers.

" Duty ? What does it mean ?" cried Cecilia, opening her eyes.

The image stood on the table, and the candle was flaring low in the socket. Her arms were stiff, her body cold—hours must have elapsed. She shivered, a sob burst from her throat, and she sought her bed. Mrs. Denvil returned from her ball at that moment. The dressing-room had been restored to order by the sleepy maid. The lady

drew a slip of perfumed note-paper from her glove. Her eyes were very bright, her lips parched. The note implored her, in the most flowery Italian, to consent to the Nile voyage, as the Countess di Moccoli would also go in that case. Mrs. Denvil laughed her carefully acquired little laugh of studied indifference, and glanced at herself in the mirror. She was not too old to be admired, although her daughter was fifteen. The dream of Alfredo, Count Martellini, was to make a Nile voyage in her company. People would talk, of course. People always talk scandal about somebody. The pretty woman, with her insatiable vanity, was already drifting on a rapid current from which there was no escape. Well, she was not alone. All the gay ladies and men of her acquaintance were also afloat on the same perilous stream. By and by they would reach the Niagara brink ; then, with a dash and a plunge, all would be over. The end ? They would have lived, drained the goblet, and flung it away. When it is fashionable to exaggerate sentiment in every phase, women of Mrs. Denvil's type, fond of luxury and extravagance, intoxicated with dissipation in foreign cities, do not place themselves in the rear ranks.

She tore the note into bits, and smiled again in the mirror. A pale light passed over the glass surface, blue and ghostly ; the reflected face grew haggard ; patches of rouge stood out on the cheeks ; dark shadows gathered beneath the eyes ; even the careful coiffure was dishevelled ; a stain

of wine was visible on the satin gown; powder became glaringly apparent on the dimpled shoulder. The enemy was dawn of a day destined to mark the crisis in Augusta Denvil's life. She shrank from it, without knowing why, and drew the heavy curtains.

Five o'clock on the Pincian Hill, with the setting sun casting its ruddy rays over the city spires and roofs. The band was playing, the carriages wending slowly up the drive, the children darting about the flower beds, where the fountain sparkled. Mrs. Denvil's maroon liveries and spirited horses had already made the circuit, the lady in pale turquoise blue betraying none of the fatigue of dawn, and receiving complacently that homage of admiration which Italy never fails to bestow on an attractive woman in a fine equipage. The Countess di Moccoli had left her own phaeton for a seat beside Mrs. Denvil—an attention the most gratifying in public—to discuss the Nile voyage. Also the Count Martellini, in faultless attire, a jasmine blossom in his button-hole, and yellow gloves, having assisted at this exchange, had consented to take a seat opposite the two ladies. He seldom drove with Mrs. Denvil. The count punctiliously observed appearances. He did not dislike the circulation of a rumor which elected him as the devoted cavalier of the rich American lady—a position which kept other men at a distance.

Cecilia darted forward from a sheltered path and laid her hand on the carriage door. Her look was

troubled and perplexed. Suspicion had taken no positive form in her mind ; she was merely striving to read San Donato's message, which had haunted her memory all day : " These through great affliction came, but they never swerved from duty. Are you afraid ?"

" Mamma, come home with me !" she cried, clinging to the door.

" You here, Cecilia !" the mother exclaimed.

" Yes ; come home," she reiterated.

" You must sit beside me and take a drive instead," interposed the count, quick to avert a scene.

" No ; do not touch *me*," said Cecilia, her large eyes flashing.

" Jealousy," thought the Countess di Moccoli.

Mrs. Denvil shook her finger playfully at the intruder, and resumed her conversation. She supposed mademoiselle was back among the trees. Mademoiselle was at home ; Cecilia had run away from her to follow her mamma. This was the girl's reading of San Donato's message. She drew back, hurt and offended. She had failed. The slight childish form crossed to the parapet, and stood there, looking down on the Piazza del Popolo, where the pedestrians were dwarfed to pigmies. She thought of her absent father, who represented ever an earthly providence to her, by reason of mademoiselle's admonition, the supply of pin-money, and the letters she wrote under dictation. She idealized this distant yet benign influence.

Behind her the crowd increased, the music rose and fell, the carriages moved rapidly past each other in a maze of wheels. On the horizon the red ball of a sun dipped, shedding a tremulous rosy mist over St. Peter's dome.

Cecilia turned, saw her mother's landau again approaching, yielded to a childish impulse, and ran toward it, repenting of her rudeness to the count. He had always been so gentle, so tender with her, from the first. Her eyes were fixed on the maroon liveries ; she strove to attract the count's notice, approached the brink of gliding vehicles, then her foot slipped on the freshly sprinkled gravel ; she fell, and the carriage passed over her.

A little heap lay in the road ; other horses were reined in furiously, not to trample on it as well. The American lady had run over her own child. That blood-curdling shriek of horror ! that jolt on a soft yielding substance was the passage of her wheels on her flesh, the additional weight of stout Countess di Moccoli and of Count Martellini aiding, if possible, in crushing out a fragile existence.

Later the count was confronted by a white stricken woman. He was full of sympathy and pity for his playmate ; tears stood in his beautiful eyes.

"Leave us alone !" she said, fiercely, even wildly.

The count shrugged his shoulders, frowned, and departed. Palpable injustice in the capricious creature woman. He was a philosopher, and ap-

peared at a diplomatic reception that evening. Matters might have been worse. As a sentimentalist he had made as much love as he dared to a pretty married woman whose husband was absent, while she was manifestly flattered by his attentions. Practically speaking, he as an impoverished noble had reaped advantage from his place as habitué of the circle of a rich American in a land where a nice percentage exists on custom. He had directed the money of Henry Denvil into those channels of expenditure which would benefit himself by skilful advice. The Nile voyage would set the world wholly at defiance.

Stout, good-natured Countess di Moccoli also appeared at the diplomatic reception that evening, and we may rest assured no mention was made of a young girl having been run over at the Pincio in the gilded salons where both moved. One does not mention illness and death in gilded salons, amid the ripple of music and laughter. One frequents these resorts to forget, if possible, such grim and ghastly realities.

Thus closed the 23d of November, 18—.

II.

“The house rests not on the earth, but on the wife.”—*Serbian Proverb.*

Mr. Henry Denvil arose at ten o'clock on the morning of the 24th of November. His head ached ;

his recollections of the previous evening were confused, further than a conviction that he had partaken of a champagne supper at the hotel, and played cards for money afterward with Jacques Robin and his wife. A man must occupy his evenings in some way.

The habits of earlier life were still sufficiently strong to render him ashamed of having slept until ten o'clock. He drank his coffee hastily, pressed his slouch hat down over his brow, and did not glance at the hotel as he walked along the village street to the foundry. Eyes were watching him from a window of that same hotel, however—keen eyes, given to studying the world for their own ends, and which now observed the figure and gait of Henry Denvil as he passed with a certain speculative interest. These eyes belonged to a woman, plain, no longer young, her sole attractions a soft voice and pleasing manner; and a small, meagre man, wiry as a grasshopper, with gray hair, a yellow skin, large nose, and a peevish mouth. In the faces of both husband and wife was a hungry, pinched look. Years of poverty sometimes sets such a seal on the human countenance.

This couple were Monsieur Jacques Robin and his wife, emigrants from Heaven knows what past life in their native land, and now dwelling drearily, it must be confessed, in the one tavern of Foundryville—a mere hamlet back among the mountains of Pennsylvania. A year previously Monsieur Robin had applied for the post of clerk

in the foundry, and obtaining the modest situation, madame had subsequently appeared on the scene. If existence had been dull for Mrs. Denvil up here among the hills, how much more so was it likely to prove for a woman of Madame Robin's abilities! She took to studying Henry Denvil, and her sky cleared. She knew every particular of his history and family before he even saw her. When he did observe her, Madame Robin made no impression on him beyond being genteel and modest in appearance. Wait! A foreigner soured by poverty, endowed by nature with artfulness, knowledge of humanity in its baser aspects, a certain feline patience, may achieve much in a hamlet among the hills.

On this morning Monsieur Robin had run up from the foundry with a letter for his wife. She read it eagerly.

"It is as I thought!" she exclaimed. "Gustave was always clever at discovery. He has managed to communicate with Mrs. Denvil's own maid at Rome, and learned enough. She will always make excuse to live in Europe, the people flatter her, and she is already much talked about as having fallen in love with the Roman Count Martellini."

"Well?" said the husband, doubtfully, irritably.

"I tell you I have them *all* here in the palm of my hand," retorted madame, with kindling excitement. "In another year I shall be installed as

housekeeper in the proprietor's house. You will not only amuse him with cards in the evening, but gain his confidence. Chut ! There are secrets to be sold in business to rival houses if necessary. He is a stupid man, without intimate friends, and wholly unsuspicious. He is no match for us. If madame deserts her home for Paris and Rome, *ma foi !* it is *our* opportunity.'

The speaker's dark face flushed, and her eyes glittered. Monsieur Robin returned to the foundry with his figure rather more erect than usual. Feminine enthusiasm is frequently contagious.

In the mean while Henry Denvil had reached his place of business. The European mail also brought him a letter from his wife, inclosing another from his little Cecilia. In this home correspondence Mrs. Denvil always dwelt on the development of her children. Was she not living abroad to educate them ? Was she not wintering in Rome to benefit Cecilia's delicate throat ? For this end she required more and more money.

Mr. Denvil read his daughter's note first, and smiled at the request that he should come to Rome for Christmas-day. Then he leaned his head on his hand, and tapped his desk with his penknife, absently. How the years slipped away ! What had he to anticipate in the clouded future ? Would these children, now receiving a foreign education, ever return contentedly to live at Foundryville ? Well, they were Augusta's children, and she was an ambitious mother. He made no complaint at

the prolonged absence of his family ; he was used to it. He never failed to send the required remittances. "The money belongs to Augusta," he always said to himself. Besides, his own expenses were small. One by one the rooms of his large house had been closed through disuse, and a half-grown boy waited on him in the wing. Dust had settled on the rich furniture ordered years ago with such pride to make a fitting nest for his bride ; rust gnawed the mute strings of his daughter's piano ; the conservatory had been abandoned ; the garden was neglected. Henry Denvil had never been an epicure ; now he lived from hand to mouth.

Seventeen years before, he had arrived at Foundryville, a man of forty, who had worked hard for the money he was prepared to invest in the foundry. The death of the previous owner compelled his widow to sell out at a sacrifice. Henry Denvil made a good bargain, instituted energetic reforms in the works, lived altogether at Foundryville, gained the confidence of his miners and "hands" by being one of them, and prospered. His predecessor's widow adjusted the exchange of property in the presence of her daughter Augusta, a beautiful girl of eighteen. Plain Henry Denvil, accustomed to toil-worn women in calico gowns, was dazzled by the graceful manners, white hands, and elegance of these two fashionable ladies. He fell in love for the first time, was encouraged to pay his addresses, married Augusta, and built the large house at Foundryville. His wife was

above him in birth, education, and social position ; his mother-in-law, during her lifetime, never permitted him to forget this circumstance.

Augusta accepted his devotion at first very sweetly, as a matter of course, then a little wearily. The climate of Foundryville gave her neuralgia. She spent whole winters at Washington and in Florida. He could not leave his business for a day without anxiety. The master's hand must never relax its hold of the helm. He was a proud husband and father ; his own nature, sound to the core, accepted without thought of self-sacrifice the enjoyment of his wife in travel. He knew nothing of society, or of the world in which she lived at present. That he placed his family in the peril of evil association in Europe, without himself there as the natural protector, had not once occurred to his mind. Like all men who have earned their own fortune, his first aim had been to bestow on his son and daughter those advantages of study in which his own youth had been deficient. Hence his acquiescence in the plan of sending Jack to Switzerland and Cecilia to Paris, Dresden, or Rome. Mrs. Denvil's arguments in favor of this arrangement had prevailed. Would not the children have been sent away from Foundryville in any case ?

The foundry absorbed his day as the great furnace devoured its fuel. As for his evenings ? He was not a reading man ; his home was silent and dull. He had acquired the habit of dropping in at the tavern and playing cards with his clerk, M.

Jacques Robin. He learned many new games, *écarté*, *baccarat*, *rouge et noir*, among the number. The diversion amused him. Often he found himself speculating as to a mistake made the previous evening in the midst of daily business, or a different plan of playing a winning card the ensuing night.

When the hearthstone is cold, a man seeks forgetfulness elsewhere.

The character of Henry Denvil was on the verge of rapid deterioration. He failed to perceive it. He was puzzled to account for having lost so much money in so short a space of time. That was all. Instinct was at work in the little community, the foundry, where swarthy creatures with bared arms flitted like demons about the great furnace, moulding the fused metal into shapes. These found leisure to curse the "sneaking Frenchman" at the hotel; but the imprecations were gathered up in the whirl and clash of machinery, the din of bells, the hoarse shouting of many voices, and went no further. Outside, the hills towered high above the little hamlet, and the river foamed along the valley. The world was very remote.

"Come to Rome for Christmas," mused Henry Denvil, still resting his head on his hand, and idly scrawling figures on the back of the letter with a pencil.

The request stung him to the quick. He was not needed to complete the happiness of a Roman Christmas. Was not Madame Robin always so interested to hear about Cecilia? This poor mother

had once possessed such a daughter. From these conversations invariably resulted doubt, cynicism, depression. Would his family dwell in peace at dull Foundryville? Alas! no. The coming years were as blank in prospect as was the present in reality, under the subtle suggestions of Madame Robin's sympathy.

M. Jacques Robin quitted his desk in the corner of the office and approached on tip-toe. Henry Denvil had drawn a card, the ace of diamonds, on the back of his daughter's letter. M. Robin smirked.

"If you are disengaged at eight o'clock, I should like to show you another game," he said, in a discreet and respectful tone.

"Yes," assented the master, moodily.

The November night settled gloomily on Foundryville. Mist swathed the hill-tops and rolled along the slopes, the rain fell monotonously, and the river, invisible in the darkness, mingled its melancholy music with the fitful sougling of the wind. Lights gleamed in the windows of the houses; occasionally a great glare illuminated the whole village; the withered foliage glowed in the shaft of crimson fire; far below, the water twinkled and rippled as if reflecting a conflagration: it was the hour of casting at the foundry, when the chimney belched its volumes of smoke, and the molten iron poured forth in rivulets, like a lava torrent, in the black void of the vast building.

Up in the master's home a single feeble ray was

visible in the inhabited wing. Henry Denvil had fallen asleep in his chair. He awoke, looked at his watch, and rose. Eight o'clock. He caught a glimpse of his own face in the glass; it was pale and worn. He resumed his chair. The clock ticked in-doors; the rain fell steadily out-of-doors. The lamp had been so placed that its rays fell on a portrait opposite his chair. This portrait represented his daughter Cecilia at the age of ten—a charming blonde head, skilfully treated by the artist, and the large eyes were turned full upon him with a frank intelligence. Henry Denvil was not of an imaginative temperament; his prime had been too fully occupied for idle reveries; but now solitude was rendering him sensitive to morbid influences. When he awoke he became vividly, intensely conscious of the gaze of this picture fixed on himself. He sat motionless, and studied it, instead of going out. Nine o'clock. A tap at the door, and M. Jacques Robin stood on the threshold, deferential in manner, wet as to garments, having awaited his guest for an hour. Henry Denvil laughed loudly, almost roughly, seized his hat, and sought the village tavern.

The play was reckless that night. The visitor was in the mood for high stakes. Monsieur Robin lost and won without the quiver of an eyelash or a change of hue in the dull opacity of his complexion. Henry Denvil lost and won with the veins growing knotted and prominent in forehead and temple, and his color deepening from red to crim-

son. Madame Robin, cool and quiet, crocheted little threads of silk together into a golden mesh with a sharp and slender needle, and from time to time served the gentlemen with wine.

Eleven o'clock. Some person tapped Henry Denvil on the shoulder. He glanced up impatiently, with bloodshot eyes. The landlord of the tavern gave him a telegram, while the official who had brought it waited at the door. He read :

"Come to us immediately. Cecilia has been run over. Tell me what to do.—AUGUSTA DENVIL."

Then he was standing outside in the dark night, the rain, chill and dreary as destiny, beating on his bare head, while the clouds rolled low, and the river sent up its murmur from the valley below. His little girl would be dead, he felt convinced, before he could reach her.

III.

"The nest of the blind bird is made by God."—*Armenian Proverb.*

Christmas-day at Rome, as cold and crisp as any Northern festival, with a piercing Tramontane wind sweeping across the piazza, the Alban Hills snow-crested, as if cut in alabaster, and the fountains fringed with icicles.

A gay and brilliant Christmas for a holiday world, with roses blooming still in sheltered nooks ; a devout Christmas for those prepared to read its beautiful meaning in ancient churches, each of which had found a voice in full choral harmonies on this day ; a Christmas of silent and devout thankfulness for those escaped the shadow of death.

Cecilia Denvil had been hovering on the borderland of feverish delirium, where all is unreal, for weeks. Since the afternoon when the carriage-wheels of her mother had passed over her, the present had been blotted out. She was in her own home once more, she raved of her father, her pet birds, the garden. When fever consumed her she was in the foundry, the lava torrent of metal from the furnace mouth creeping nearer and nearer, threatening to engulf her. Gradually this tumult of restless imagery subsided to a great calm. She wandered with San Donato, the mighty angel, in fields of lilies so vast that they seemed a sea of bloom. Then she became painfully aware of other shapes that bent over her, touched her. A man and a woman met at her side and clasped hands ; their faces were vaguely familiar. Rome had vanished, been obliterated ; she only wandered among the lilies, guided by a glorious angel, his robe rose-colored, with margin of gold, and a palm branch in his hand. Certainly she must have passed away to another world.

Henry Denvil, on receipt of that telegram, had

left Foundryville by the first train, overtaken an outward-bound steamer by means of a small boat, and traversed England and France without delay. Arrived at the apartment in Rome which bore his wife's name, he was met by her, a pale, distraught creature, who clung to him with hysterical sobs, and searched his face with anxious, terrified eyes.

"Is she dead?" he faltered, hoarsely.

"Oh no; but the surgeons think her limbs will be always useless, and she a cripple."

He soothed, but put her aside to seek his child instead. Augusta Denvil was conscious, for the first time, of a dull pang of jealousy. In the long and painful days which ensued Henry Denvil had eyes and thoughts only for Cecilia, while the latter, by one of those curious instincts of illness, would accept nothing from another hand after his arrival.

The mother's ordeal began earlier, and her waning youth had shrivelled in the anguish she was then compelled to endure. Cecilia, from the first, had been deaf to her mother's most tender tones, winced and screamed at the touch of her fingers, even when lying with closed eyes. Mrs. Denvil, in the awful and solemn watches of the night, read in this aversion the doom of retribution. Her spirit succumbed in the trial. The girl's foot might indeed have slipped and she been run over anywhere. True, but by her own mother's wheels!

Christmas morning, so glorious and bright with-

out, was gray and sober within this apartment of a family of strangers, where each face bore evidence of watching, care, grief.

Cecilia opened her eyes and glanced about her. She was lying on her own bed in her little chamber at Rome, only some sharp sword-thrust of circumstance had wholly severed her from the past. Her face was calm, almost solemn in expression. It seemed natural that her father should be sitting beside her holding her hand and striving to speak cheerfully. She was not startled by the fact that brother Jack stood at the foot of the bed. She noticed, entirely without responsive emotion, that her mother had concealed her face on father's shoulder, shaken by uncontrollable sobs. Her first words were :

“Where is San Donato?”

Her family failed to understand her. Mademoiselle Durand, also tremulous and in tears, heard and hastened away to her own room. She returned with the little image.

“It is her fancy,” murmured the governess.

Cecilia indicated by a gesture that it was to be placed in her father's hands. Mr. Denvil held it carefully, while the invalid gazed steadfastly at her saint. They waited for her next words in silence and suspense. The joy of a convalescent is seldom demonstrative. She did not speak again for an hour. Then she exclaimed suddenly, in stronger tones :

“It is Christmas day and papa has come.”

Henry Denvil bent over and kissed the wasted little face, praying in his heart it might only be spared to him.

Jack looked on, stiff and ill at ease, after the manner of boys in a sick-chamber. He answered his father's inquiries in constrained and difficult English, with frequent lapses into French. Four years in a Swiss school had wrought wonders for Jack, especially as his mother had left him to take walking tours with his tutors during the summer vacations. A foreign education had been Mrs. Denvil's idea of preparation for life as an American citizen, especially at Foundryville.

There was another lapse into stillness before Cecilia's voice became again audible.

"If I had not—met with the accident on the Pincio, *would* you have come to Rome for Christmas?"

"I fear not, my child."

"Are we to go home with you now?"

"Yes."

Cecilia smiled and closed her eyes. Did she thus understand San Donato's message at last?

Madame Robin will not be installed as house-keeper in the master's house. In the future, Mrs. Denvil, with the reaction of a shallow nature, may make trips to better climates for her neuralgia, or Jack be absent at college; but Henry Denvil—nay, the very foundry—cannot be more constant to the spot than his daughter. There will be no balls for her, clad in satin, pearls and diamonds

twinkling in her hair and about her throat, no dancing days, no début in society as an heiress. Instead, Cecilia will flit from room to room of the long silent home in a wheel-chair, a presence bright, cheerful, watchful, now pausing in the sunny conservatory where each unfolding flower seems aware of her presence, now awaiting the father's return from work.

Above the entrance door will be enshrined the image of San Donato, guardian of the home, whose mission is to avert evil.

Stories by American Authors.

VIII.

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Stories by American Authors

VIII.

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER.

By J. W. DE FOREST.

SPLIT ZEPHYR.

By HENRY A. BEERS.

ZERVIAH HOPE.

By ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.

THE LIFE-MAGNET.

By ALVEY A. ADEE.

OSGOOD'S PREDICAMENT.

By ELIZABETH D. B. STODDARD.

NEW YORK
CHARLES SCRIBNER'S SONS

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THE BRIGADE COMMANDER.

BY J. W. DE FOREST.

THE Colonel was the idol of his bragging old regiment and of the bragging brigade which for the last six months he had commanded.

He was the idol, not because he was good and gracious, not because he spared his soldiers or treated them as fellow-citizens, but because he had led them to victory and made them famous. If a man will win battles and give his brigade a right to brag loudly of its doings, he may have its admiration and even its enthusiastic devotion, though he be as pitiless and as wicked as Lucifer.

"It's nothin' to me what the Currnell is in prrrivit, so long as he shows us how to whack the rrebs," said Major Gahogan, commandant of the "Old Tenth." "Moses saw God in the burrnin' bussh, an' bowed down to it, an' worrshipt it. It wasn't the bussh he worrshipt; it was his God that was in it. An' I worrship this villin of a

Curnell (if he is a villin) because he's almighty and gives us the vict'ry. He's nothin' but a human burrnin' bussh, perhaps, but he's got the god of war in um. Adjutant Wallis, it's a —— long time between dhrinks, as I think ye was sayin', an' with rayson. See if ye can't confiscate a canteen of whiskee somewhere in the camp. Bedad, if I can't buy it I'll stale it. We're goin' to fight to-morry, an' it may be it's the last chance we'll have for a dhrink, unless there's more lik'r now in the other worrld than Dives got."

The brigade was bivouacked in some invisible region, amid the damp, misty darkness of a September night. The men lay in their ranks, each with his feet to the front and his head rearward, each covered by his overcoat and pillowed upon his haversack, each with his loaded rifle nestled close beside him. Asleep as they were, or dropping placidly into slumber, they were ready to start in order to their feet and pour out the red light and harsh roar of combat. There were two lines of battle, each of three regiments of infantry, the first some two hundred yards in advance of the second. In the space between them lay two four-gun batteries, one of them brass twelve-pounder "Napoleons," and the other rifled Parrotts. To the rear of the infantry were the recumbent troopers and picketed horses of a regiment of cavalry. All around, in the far, black distance, invisible and inaudible, paced or watched stealthily the sentinels of the grand guards.

There was not a fire, nor a torch, nor a star-beam in the whole bivouac to guide the feet of Adjutant Wallis in his pilgrimage after whisky. The orders from brigade headquarters had been strict against illuminations, for the Confederates were near at hand in force, and a surprise was purposed as well as feared. A tired and sleepy youngster, almost dropping with the heavy somnolence of wearied adolescence, he stumbled on through the trials of an undiscernible and unfamiliar footing, lifting his heavy riding-boots sluggishly over imaginary obstacles, and fearing the while lest his toil were labor misspent. It was a dry camp, he felt dolefully certain, or there would have been more noise in it. He fell over a sleeping Sergeant, and said to him hastily, "Steady, man—a friend!" as the half-roused soldier clutched his rifle. Then he found a Lieutenant, and shook him in vain; further on a Captain, and exchanged saddening murmurs with him; further still a camp-follower of African extraction, and blasphemed him.

"It's a God-forsaken camp, and there isn't a horn in it," said Adjutant Wallis to himself as he pursued his groping journey. "Bet you I don't find the first drop," he continued, for he was a betting boy, and frequently argued by wagers, even with himself. "Bet you two to one I don't. Bet you three to one—ten to one."

Then he saw, an indefinite distance beyond him, burning like red-hot iron through the darkness, a little scarlet or crimson gleam, as of a lighted cigar.

"That's Old Grumps, of the Bloody Fourteenth," he thought. "I've raided into his happy sleeping-grounds. I'll draw on him."

But Old Grumps, otherwise Colonel Lafayette Gildersleeve, had no rations—that is, no whisky.

"How do you suppose an officer is to have a drink, Lieutenant?" he grumbled.

"Don't you know that our would-be Brigadier sent all the commissary to the rear day before yesterday? A canteenful can't last two days. Mine went empty about five minutes ago."

"Oh, thunder!" groaned Wallis, saddened by that saddest of all thoughts, "Too late!" "Well, least said soonest mended. I must wobble back to my Major."

"He'll send you off to some other camp as dry as this one. Wait ten minutes, and he'll be asleep. Lie down on my blanket and light your pipe. I want to talk to you about official business—about our would-be Brigadier."

"Oh, *your* turn will come some day," mumbled Wallis, remembering Gildersleeve's jealousy of the brigade commander—a jealousy which only gave tongue when aroused by "commissary." "If you do as well as usual to-morrow you can have your own brigade."

"I suppose you think we are all going to do well to-morrow," scoffed old Grumps, whose utterance by this time stumbled. "I suppose you expect to whip and to have a good time. I suppose you brag on fighting and enjoy it."

"I like it well enough when it goes right ; and it generally does go right with this brigade. I should like it better if the rebs would fire higher and break quicker."

"That depends on the way those are commanded whose business it is to break them," growled Old Grumps. "I don't say but what we are rightly commanded," he added, remembering his duty to superiors. "I concede and acknowledge that our would-be Brigadier knows his military business. But the blessing of God, Wallis ! I believe in Waldron as a soldier. But as a man and a Christian, faugh !"

Gildersleeve had clearly emptied his canteen unassisted ; he never talked about Christianity when perfectly sober.

"What was your last remark ?" inquired Wallis, taking his pipe from his mouth to grin. Even a superior officer might be chaffed a little in the darkness.

"I made no last remark," asserted the Colonel with dignity. "I'm not a-dying yet. If I said anything last it was a mere exclamation of disgust—the disgust of an officer and gentleman. I suppose you know something about our would-be Brigadier. I suppose you think you know something about him."

"Bet you I know *all* about him," affirmed Wallis. "He enlisted in the old Tenth as a common soldier. Before he had been a week in camp they found that he knew his biz, and they made him

a Sergeant. Before we started for the field the Governor got his eye on him and shoved him into a Lieutenancy. The first battle h'isted him to a Captain. And the second—bang ! whiz ! he shot up to Colonel, right over the heads of everybody, line and field. Nobody in the old Tenth grumbled. They saw that he knew his biz. I know *all* about him. What'll you bet ?”

“ I'm not a betting man, Lieutenant, except in a friendly game of poker,” sighed Old Grumps. “ You don't know anything about your Brigadier,” he added in a sepulchral murmur, the echo of an empty canteen. “ I have only been in this brigade a month, and I know more than you do, far, very far more, sorry to say it. He's a reformed clergyman. He's an apostatized minister.” The Colonel's voice as he said this was solemn and sad enough to do credit to an undertaker. “ It's a bad sort, Wallis,” he continued, after another deep sigh, a very highly perfumed one, the sigh of a bar-keeper. “ When a clergyman falls, he falls for life and eternity, like a woman or an angel. I never knew a backslidden shepherd to come to good. Sooner or later he always goes to the devil, and takes down whomsoever hangs to him.”

“ He'll take down the old Tenth, then,” asserted Wallis. “ It hangs to him. Bet you two to one he takes it along.”

“ You're right, Adjutant ; spoken like a soldier,” swore Gildersleeve. “ And the Bloody Fourteenth, too ! It will march into the burning pit as far as

any regiment ; and the whole brigade, yes sir ! But a backslidden shepherd, my God ! Have we come to that ? I often say to myself, in the solemn hours of the night, as I remember my Sabbath-school days, ' Great Scott, have we come to that ? ' A reformed clergyman ! An apostatized minister ! Think of it, Wallis, think of it ! Why, sir, his very wife ran away from him. They had but just buried their first boy," pursued Old Grumps, his hoarse voice sinking to a whimper. " They drove home from the burial-place, where lay the new-made grave. Arrived at their door, *he* got out and extended his hand to help *her* out. Instead of accepting, instead of throwing herself into his arms and weeping there, she turned to the coachman and said, ' Driver, drive me to my father's house.' That was the end of their wedded life, Wallis."

The Colonel actually wept at this point, and the maudlin tears were not altogether insincere. His own wife and children he heartily loved, and remembered them now with honest tenderness. At home he was not a drinker and a rough ; only amid the hardships and perils of the field.

" That was the end of it, Wallis," he repeated. " And what was it while it lasted ? What does a woman leave her husband for ? Why does she separate from him over the grave of her innocent first-born ? There are twenty reasons, but they must all of them be good ones. I am sorry to give it as my decided opinion, Wallis, in perfect confidence, that they must all be whopping good

ones. Well, that was the beginning; only the beginning. After that he held on for a while, breaking the bread of life to a skedaddling flock, and then he bolted. The next known of him, three years later, he enlisted in your regiment, a smart but seedy recruit, smelling strongly of whisky."

"I wish I smelt half as strong of it myself," grumbled Wallis. "It might keep out the swamp fever."

"That's the true story of Col. John James Waldron," continued Old Grumps, with a groan which was very somnolent, as if it were a twin to a snore. "That's the true story."

"I don't believe the first word of it—that is to say, Colonel, I think you have been misinformed—and I'll bet you two to one on it. If he was nothing more than a minister, how did he know drill and tactics?"

"Oh, I forgot to say, he went through West Point—that is, nearly through. They graduated him in his third year by the back door, Wallis."

"Oh, that was it, was it? He was a West Pointer, was he? Well, then, the backsliding was natural, and oughtn't to count against him. A member of Benny Havens' church has a right to backslide anywhere, especially as the Colonel doesn't seem to be any worse than some of the rest of us, who haven't fallen from grace the least particle, but took our stand at the start just where we are now. A fellow that begins with a handful of trumps has a right to play a risky game."

"I know what euchered him, Wallis. It was the old Little Joker ; and there's another of the same on hand now."

"On hand where? What are you driving at, Colonel?"

"He looks like a boy. I mean she looks like a boy. You know what I mean, Wallis ; I mean the boy that makes believe wait on him. And her brother is in camp, got here to-night. There'll be an explanation to-morrow, and there'll be bloodshed."

"Good-night, Colonel, and sleep it off," said Wallis, rising from the side of a man whom he believed to be sillily drunk and altogether untrustworthy. "You know we get after the rebs at dawn."

"I know it—goo-night, Adjutant—gawbless-you," mumbled Old Grumps. "We'll lick those rebs, won't we?" he chuckled. "Goo-night, ole fellow, an' gawblessyou."

Whereupon Old Grumps fell asleep, very absurdly overcome by liquor, we extremely regret to concede, but nobly sure to do his soldierly duty as soon as he should awake.

Stumbling wearily blanketward, Wallis found his Major and regimental commander, the genial and gallant Gahogan, slumbering in a peace like that of the just. He stretched himself a-near, put out his hand to touch his sabre and revolver, drew his caped great-coat over him, moved once to free his back of a root or pebble, glanced languidly at

a single struggling star, thought for an instant of his far-away mother, turned his head with a sigh, and slept. In the morning he was to fight, and perhaps to die ; but the boyish veteran was too seasoned, and also too tired, to mind that ; he could mind but one thing—nature's pleading for rest.

In the iron-gray dawn, while the troops were falling dimly and spectrally into line, and he was mounting his horse to be ready for orders, he remembered Gildersleeve's drunken tale concerning the commandant, and laughed aloud. But turning his face toward brigade headquarters (a sylvan region marked out by the branches of a great oak), he was surprised to see a strange officer, a fair young man in Captain's uniform, riding slowly toward it.

"Is that the Boy's brother?" he said to himself; and in the next instant he had forgotten the whole subject ; it was time to form and present the regiment.

Quietly and without tap of drum the small, battleworn battalions filed out of their bivouacs into the highway, ordered arms and waited for the word to march. With a dull rumble the field-pieces trundled slowly after, and halted in rear of the infantry. The cavalry trotted off circuitously through the fields, emerged upon the road in advance and likewise halted, all but a single company, which pushed on for half a mile, spreading out as it went into a thin line of skirmishers.

Meanwhile a strange interview took place near the great oak which had sheltered brigade headquarters. As the unknown officer, whom Wallis had noted, approached it, Col. Waldron was standing by his horse ready to mount. The commandant was a man of medium size, fairly handsome in person and features, and apparently about twenty-eight years of age. Perhaps it was the singular breadth of his forehead which made the lower part of his face look so unusually slight and feminine. His eyes were dark hazel, as clear, brilliant, and tender as a girl's, and brimming full of a pensiveness which seemed both loving and melancholy. Few persons, at all events few women, who looked upon him ever looked beyond his eyes. They were very fascinating, and in a man's countenance very strange. They were the kind of eyes which reveal passionate romances, and which make them.

By his side stood a boy, a singularly interesting and beautiful boy, fair-haired and blue-eyed, and delicate in color. When this boy saw the stranger approach he turned as pale as marble, slid away from the brigade commander's side, and disappeared behind a group of staff officers and orderlies. The new-comer also became deathly white as he glanced after the retreating youth. Then he dismounted, touched his cap slightly and, as if mechanically, advanced a few steps, and said hoarsely, "I believe this is Colonel Waldron. I am Captain Fitz Hugh, of the —th Delaware."

Waldron put his hand to his revolver, withdrew it instantaneously, and stood motionless.

"I am on leave of absence from my regiment, Colonel," continued Fitz Hugh, speaking now with an elaborate ceremoniousness of utterance significant of a struggle to suppress violent emotion. "I suppose you can understand why I made use of it in seeking you."

Waldron hesitated ; he stood gazing at the earth with the air of one who represses deep pain ; at last, after a profound sigh, he raised his eyes and answered.

"Captain, we are on the eve of a battle. I must attend to my public duties first. After the battle we will settle our private affair."

"There is but one way to settle it, Colonel."

"You shall have your way if you will. You shall do what you will. - I only ask what good will it do to *her*?"

"It will do good to *me*, Colonel," whispered Fitz Hugh, suddenly turning crimson. "You forget *me*."

Waldron's face also flushed, and an angry sparkle shot from under his lashes in reply to this utterance of hate, but it died out in an instant.

"I have done a wrong, and I will accept the consequences," he said. "I pledge you my word that I will be at your disposal if I survive the battle. Where do you propose to remain meanwhile?"

"I will take the same chance, Sir. I propose to do my share in the fighting if you will use me."

"I am short of staff officers. Will you act as my aid?"

"I will, Colonel," bowed Fitz Hugh, with a glance which expressed surprise, and perhaps admiration, at this confidence.

Waldron turned, beckoned his staff officers to approach, and said, "Gentlemen, this is Captain Fitz Hugh of the —th Delaware. He has volunteered to join us for the day, and will act as my aid. And now, Captain, will you ride to the head of the column and order it forward? There will be no drum-beat and no noise. When you have given your order and seen it executed, you will wait for me."

Fitz Hugh saluted, sprang into his saddle and galloped away. A few minutes later the whole column was plodding on silently toward its bloody goal. To a civilian, unaccustomed to scenes of war, the tranquillity of these men would have seemed very wonderful. Many of the soldiers were still munching the hard bread and raw pork of their meagre breakfasts, or drinking the cold coffee with which they had filled their canteens the day previous. Many more were chatting in an undertone, grumbling over their sore feet and other discomforts, chaffing each other, and laughing. The general bearing, however, was grave, patient, quietly enduring, and one might almost say stolid. You would have said, to judge by their expres-

sions, that these sunburnt fellows were merely doing hard work, and thoroughly commonplace work, without a prospect of adventure, and much less of danger. The explanation of this calmness, so brutal perhaps to the eye of a sensitive soul, lies mainly in the fact that they were all veterans, the survivors of marches, privations, maladies, sieges, and battles. Not a regiment present numbered four hundred men, and the average was not above three hundred. The whole force, including artillery and cavalry, might have been about twenty-five hundred sabres and bayonets.

At the beginning of the march Waldron fell into the rear of his staff and mounted orderlies. Then the Boy who had fled from Fitz Hugh dropped out of the tramping escort, and rode up to his side.

"Well, Charlie," said Waldron, casting a pitying glance at the yet pallid face and anxious eyes of the youth, "you have had a sad fright. I make you very miserable."

"He has found us at last," murmured Charlie in a tremulous soprano voice. "What did he say?"

"We are to talk to-morrow. He acts as my aide-de-camp to-day. I ought to tell you frankly that he is not friendly."

"Of course, I knew it," sighed Charlie, while the tears fell.

"It is only one more trouble—one more danger, and perhaps it may pass. So many *have* passed."

"Did you tell him anything to quiet him? Did you tell him that we were married?"

"But we are not married yet, Charlie. We shall be, I hope."

"But you ought to have told him that we were. It might stop him from doing something—mad. Why didn't you tell him so? Why didn't you think of it?"

"My dear little child, we are about to have a battle. I should like to carry some honor and truth into it."

"Where is he?" continued Charlie, unconvinced and unappeased. "I want to see him. Is he at the head of the column? I want to speak to him, just one word. He won't hurt me."

She suddenly spurred her horse, wheeled into the fields, and dashed onward. Fitz Hugh was lounging in his saddle, and sombrely surveying the passing column, when she galloped up to him.

"Carrol!" she said, in a choked voice, reining in by his side, and leaning forward to touch his sleeve.

He threw one glance at her—a glance of aversion, if not of downright hatred, and turned his back in silence.

"He is my husband, Carrol," she went on rapidly. "I knew you didn't understand it. I ought to have written you about it. I thought I would come and tell you before you did anything absurd. We were married as soon as he heard that his wife was dead."

"What is the use of this?" he muttered

hoarsely. "She is not dead. I heard from her a week ago. She was living a week ago."

"Oh, Carrol!" stammered Charlie. "It was some mistake then. Is it possible! And he was so sure! But he can get a divorce, you know. She abandoned him. Or *she* can get one. No, *he* can get it—of course, when she abandoned him. But, Carrol, she *must* be dead—he was *so* sure."

"She is *not* dead, I tell you. And there can be no divorce. Insanity bars all claim to a divorce. She is in an asylum. She had to leave him, and then she went mad."

"Oh, no, Carrol, it is all a mistake; it is not so, Carrol," she murmured in a voice so faint that he could not help glancing at her, half in fury and half in pity. She was slowly falling from her horse. He sprang from his saddle, caught her in his arms, and laid her on the turf, wishing the while that it covered her grave. Just then one of Waldron's orderlies rode up and exclaimed: "What is the matter with the—the Boy? Hullo, Charlie."

Fitz Hugh stared at the man in silence, tempted to tear him from his horse. "The boy is ill," he answered when he recovered his self-command. "Take charge of him yourself." He remounted, rode onward out of sight beyond a thicket, and there waited for the brigade commander, now and then fingering his revolver. As Charlie was being placed in an ambulance by the orderly and a sergeant's wife, Waldron came up, reined in his horse

violently, and asked in a furious voice, "Is that boy hurt?"

"Ah—fainted," he added immediately. "Thank you, Mrs. Gunner. Take good care of him—the best of care, my dear woman, and don't let him leave you all day."

Further on, when Fitz Hugh silently fell into his escort, he merely glanced at him in a furtive way, and then cantered on rapidly to the head of the cavalry. There he beckoned to the tall, grave, iron-gray Chaplain of the Tenth, and rode with him for nearly an hour, apart, engaged in low and seemingly impassioned discourse. From this interview Mr. Colquhoun returned to the escort with a strangely solemnized, tender countenance, while the commandant, with a more cheerful air than he had yet worn that day, gave himself to his martial duties, inspecting the landscape incessantly with his glass, and sending frequently for news to the advance scouts. It may properly be stated here that the Chaplain never divulged to any one the nature of the conversation which he had held with his Colonel.

Nothing further of note occurred until the little army, after two hours of plodding march, wound through a sinuous, wooded ravine, entered a broad, bare, slightly undulating valley, and for the second time halted. Waldron galloped to the summit of a knoll, pointed to a long eminence which faced him some two miles distant, and said tranquilly, "There is our battle-ground."

“Is that the enemy’s position?” returned Captain Ives, his Adjutant-General. “We shall have a tough job if we go at it from here.”

Waldron remained in deep thought for some minutes, meanwhile scanning the ridge and all its surroundings.

“What I want to know,” he observed, at last, “is whether they have occupied the wooded knolls in front of their right and around their right flank.”

Shortly afterward the commander of the scouting squadron came riding back at a furious pace.

“They are on the hill, Colonel,” he shouted.

“Yes, of course,” nodded Waldron; “but have they occupied the woods which veil their right front and flank?”

“Not a bit of it; my fellows have cantered all through, and up to the base of the hill.”

“Ah!” exclaimed the brigade commander, with a rush of elation. “Then it will be easy work. Go back, Captain, and scatter your men through the wood, and hold it, if possible. Adjutant, call up the regimental commanders at once. I want them to understand my plan fully.”

In a few minutes Gahogan, of the Tenth; Gilder-sleeve, of the Fourteenth; Peck, of the First; Thomas, of the Seventh; Taylor, of the Eighth, and Colburn, of the Fifth, were gathered around their commander. There, too, was Bradley, the boyish, red-cheeked chief of the artillery; and Stilton, the rough, old, bearded regular, who headed the cavalry. The staff was at hand, also,

including Fitz Hugh, who sat his horse a little apart, downcast and sombre and silent, but nevertheless keenly interested. It is worthy of remark, by the way, that Waldron took no special note of him, and did not seem conscious of any disturbing presence. Evil as the man may have been, he was a thoroughly good soldier, and just now he thought but of his duties.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I want you to see your field of battle. The enemy occupy that long ridge. How shall we reach it?"

"I think, if we go at it straight from here, we shan't miss it," promptly judged Old Grumps, his red-oak countenance admirably cheerful and hopeful, and his jealousy all dissolved in the interest of approaching combat.

"Nor they won't miss us nuther," laughed Major Gahogan. "Betther slide our infantree into thim wuds, push up our skirmishers, play away wid our guns for an hour, an' thin rowl in a couple o' col'ns."

There was a general murmur of approval. The limits of volunteer invention in tactics had been reached by Gahogan. The other regimental commanders looked upon him as their superior in the art of war.

"That would be well, Major, if we could do nothing better," said Waldron. "But I do not feel obliged to attack the front seriously at all. The rebels have been thoughtless enough to leave that long semicircle of wooded knolls unoccupied,

even by scouts. It stretches from the front of their centre clear around their right flank. I shall use it as a veil to cover us while we get into position. I shall throw out a regiment, a battery, and five companies of cavalry, to make a feint against their centre and left. With the remainder of the brigade I shall skirt the woods, double around the right of the position, and close in upon it front and rear."

"Loike scissors blades upon a snip o' paper," shouted Gahogan, in delight. Then he turned to Fitz Hugh, who happened to be nearest him, and added, "I tell ye he's got the God o' War in um. He's the burrnin' bussh of humanity, wid a God o' Battles inside on't."

"But how if they come down on our thin right wing?" asked a cautious officer, Taylor, of the Eighth. They might smash it and seize our line of retreat."

"Men who have taken up a strong position, a position obviously chosen for defense, rarely quit it promptly for an attack," replied Waldron. "There is not one chance in ten that these gentlemen will make a considerable forward movement early in the fight. Only the greatest geniuses jump from the defensive to the offensive. Besides, we must hold the wood. So long as we hold the wood in front of their centre we save the road."

Then came personal and detailed instructions. Each regimental commander was told whither he should march, the point where he should halt to

form line, and the direction by which he should attack. The mass of the command was to advance in marching column toward a knoll where the highway entered and traversed the wood. Some time before reaching it Taylor was to deploy the Eighth to the right, throw out a strong skirmish line and open fire on the enemy's centre and left, supported by the battery of Parrotts, and, if pushed, by five companies of cavalry. The remaining troops would reach the knoll, file to the left under cover of the forest, skirt it for a mile as rapidly as possible, enfold the right of the Confederate position, and then move upon it concentrically. Counting from the left, the Tenth, the Seventh, and the Fourteenth were to constitute the first line of battle, while five companies of cavalry, then the First, and then the Fifth formed the second line. Not until Gahogan might have time to wind into the enemy's right rear should Gilder-sleeve move out of the wood and commence the real attack.

"You will go straight at the front of their right," said Waldron, with a gay smile, to this latter Colonel. "Send up two companies as skirmishers. The moment they are clearly checked, lead up the other eight in line. It will be rough work. But keep pushing. You won't have fifteen minutes of it before Thomas, on your left, will be climbing the end of the ridge to take the rebels in flank. In fifteen minutes more Gahogan will be running in on their backs. Of course they will try

to change front and meet us. But they have extended their line a long way in order to cover the whole ridge. They will not be quick enough. We shall get hold of their right, and we shall roll them up. Then, Colonel Stilton, I shall expect to see the troopers jumping into the gaps and making prisoners."

"All right, Colonel," answered Stilton in that hoarse growl which is apt to mark the old cavalry officer. "Where shall we find you if we want a fresh order?"

"I shall be with Colburn, in rear of Gilder-sleeve. That is our centre. But never mind me; you know what the battle is to be, and you know how to fight it. The whole point with the infantry is to fold around the enemy's right, go in upon it concentrically, smash it, and roll up their line. The cavalry will watch against the infantry being flanked, and when the latter have seized the hill, will charge for prisoners. The artillery will reply to the enemy's guns with shell, and fire grape at any offensive demonstration. You all know your duties, now, gentlemen. Go to your commands, and march!"

The Colonels saluted and started off at a gallop. In a few minutes twenty-five hundred men were in simultaneous movement. Five companies of cavalry wheeled into column of companies, and advanced at a trot through the fields, seeking to gain the shelter of the forest. The six infantry regiments slid up alongside of each other, and

pushed on in six parallel columns of march, two on the right of the road and four on the left. The artillery, which alone left the highway, followed at a distance of two or three hundred yards. The remaining cavalry made a wide detour to the right, as if to flank the enemy's left.

It was a mile and a quarter—it was a march of fully twenty minutes—to the edge of the woodland, the proposed cover of the column. Ten minutes before this point was reached a tiny puff of smoke showed on the brow of the hostile ridge ; then, at an interval of several seconds, followed the sound of a distant explosion ; then, almost immediately, came the screech of a rifled shell. Every man who heard it swiftly asked himself, “ Will it strike *me* ? ” But even as the words were thought out it had passed, high in air, clean to the rear, and burst harmlessly. A few faces turned upward and a few eyes glanced backward, as if to see the invisible enemy. But there was no pause in the column ; it flowed onward quietly, eagerly, and with business-like precision ; it gave forth no sound but the trampling of feet and the muttering of the officers, “ Steady, men ! Forward, men. ”

The Confederates, however, had got their range. A half minute later four puffs of smoke dotted the ridge, and a flight of hoarse humming shrieks tore the air. A little aureole cracked and splintered over the First, followed by loud cries of anguish and a brief, slight confusion. The voice of an officer rose sharply out of the flurry, “ Close up, Com-

pany A ! Forward, men !" The battalion column resumed its even formation in an instant, and tramped unitedly onward, leaving behind it two quivering corpses and a wounded man who tottered rearward.

Then came more screeches, and a shell exploded over the high road, knocking a gunner lifeless from his carriage. The brigade commander glanced anxiously along his batteries, and addressed a few words to his chief of artillery. Presently the four Napoleons set forward at a gallop for the wood, while the four Parrotts wheeled to the right, deployed, and advanced across the fields, inclining toward the left of the enemy. Next, Taylor's regiment (the Eighth) halted, fronted, faced to the right, and filed off in column of march at a double-quick until it had gained the rear of the Parrotts, when it fronted again, and pushed on in support. A quarter of a mile further on these guns went into battery behind the brow of a little knoll, and opened fire. Four companies of the English spread out to the right as skirmishers, and commenced stealing toward the ridge, from time to time measuring the distance with rifle-balls. The remainder of the regiment lay down in line between the Parrotts and the forest. Far away to the right, five companies of cavalry showed themselves, maneuvering as if they proposed to turn the left flank of the Southerners. The attack on this side was in form and in operation.

Meantime the Confederate fire had divided.

Two guns pounded away at Taylor's feint, while two shelled the main column. The latter was struck repeatedly ; more than twenty men dropped silent or groaning out of the hurrying files ; but the survivors pushed on without faltering, and without even caring for the wounded. At last a broad belt of green branches rose between the regiments and the ridge ; and the rebel gunners, unable to see their foe, dropped suddenly into silence.

Here it appeared that the road divided. The highway traversed the forest, mounted the slope beyond and dissected the enemy's position, while a branch road turned to the left and skirted the exterior of the long curve of wooded hillocks. At the fork the battery of Napoleons had halted, and there it was ordered to remain for the present in quiet. There, too, the Fourteenth filed in among the dense greenery, threw out two companies of skirmishers toward the ridge, and pushed slowly after them into the shadows.

"Get sight of the enemy at once !" was Waldron's last word to Gildersleeve. "If they move down the slope, drive them back. But don't commence your attack under half an hour."

Next he filed the Fifth into the thickets, saying to Colburn, "I want you to halt a hundred yards to the left and rear of Gildersleeve. Cover his flank if he is attacked ; but otherwise lie quiet. As soon as he charges, move forward to the edge of the wood, and be ready to support him. But make no assault yourself until further orders."

The two next regiments—the Seventh and First—he placed in *échelon*, in like manner, a quarter of a mile further along. Then he galloped forward to the cavalry, and had a last word with Stilton. “You and Gahogan must take care of yourselves. Push on four or five hundred yards, and then face to the right. Whatever Gahogan finds let him go at it. If he can’t shake it, help him. You two *must* reach the top of the ridge. Only, look out for your left flank. Keep a squadron or two in reserve on that side.”

“Currnel, if we don’t raich the top of the hill, it’ll be because it hasn’t got wan,” answered Gahogan. Stilton only laughed and rode forward.

Waldron now returned toward the fork of the road. On the way he sent a staff officer to the Seventh with renewed orders to attack as soon as possible after Gildersleeve. Then another staff officer was hurried forward to Taylor with directions to push his feint strongly, and drive his skirmishers as far up the slope as they could get. A third staff officer set the Parrotts in rear of Taylor to firing with all their might. By the time that the commandant had returned to Colburn’s ambushed ranks, no one was with him but his enemy, Fitz Hugh.

“You don’t seem to trust me with duty, Colonel,” said the young man.

“I shall use you only in case of extremity, Captain,” replied Waldron. “We have business to settle to-morrow.”

"I ask no favors on that account. I hope you will offer me none."

"In case of need I shall spare no one," declared Waldron.

Then he took out his watch, looked at it impatiently, put it to his ear, restored it to his pocket, and fell into an attitude of deep attention. Evidently his whole mind was on his battle, and he was waiting, watching, yearning for its outburst.

"If he wins this fight," thought Fitz Hugh, "how can I do him a harm? And yet," he added, "how can I help it?"

Minutes passed. Fitz Hugh tried to think of his injury, and to steel himself against his chief. But the roar of battle on the right, and the suspense and imminence of battle on the left, absorbed the attention of even this wounded and angry spirit, as, indeed, they might have absorbed that of any being not more or less than human. A private wrong, insupportable though it might be, seemed so small amid that deadly clamor and awful expectation! Moreover, the intellect which worked so calmly and vigorously by his side, and which alone of all things near appeared able to rule the coming crisis, began to dominate him, in spite of his sense of injury. A thought crossed him to the effect that the great among men are too valuable to be punished for their evil deeds. He turned to the absorbed brigade commander, now not only his ruler but even his protector, with a feeling that he must accord him a word of peace, a proffer in

some form of possible forgiveness and friendship. But the man's face was clouded and stern with responsibility and authority. He seemed at that moment too lofty to be approached with a message of pardon. Fitz Hugh gazed at him with a mixture of profound respect and smothered hate. He gazed, turned away, and remained silent.

Minutes more passed. Then a mounted orderly dashed up at full speed, with the words, "Colonel Major Gahogan has fronted."

"Has he?" answered Waldron, with a smile which thanked the trooper and made him happy. "Ride on through the thicket here, my man, and tell Colonel Gildersleeve to push up his skirmishers."

With a thud of hoofs and a rustling of parting foliage the cavalryman disappeared amid the underwood. A minute or two later a thin, dropping rattle of musketry, five hundred yards or so to the front, announced that the sharpshooters of the Fourteenth were at work. Almost immediately there was an angry response, full of the threatenings and execution of death. Through the lofty leafage tore the screech of a shell, bursting with a sharp crash as it passed overhead, and scattering in humming slivers. Then came another, and another, and many more, chasing each other with hoarse hissings through the trembling air, a succession of flying serpents. The enemy doubtless believed that nearly the whole attacking force was massed in the wood around the road, and they had

brought at least four guns to bear upon that point, and were working them with the utmost possible rapidity. Presently a large chestnut, not fifty yards from Fitz Hugh, was struck by a shot. The solid trunk, nearly three feet in diameter, parted asunder as if it were the brittlest of vegetable matter. The upper portion started aside with a monstrous groan, dropped in a standing posture to the earth, and then toppled slowly, sublimely prostrate, its branches crashing and all its leaves wailing. Ere long, a little further to the front, another Anak of the forest went down; and, mingled with the noise of its sylvan agony, there arose sharp cries of human suffering. Then Colonel Colburn, a broad-chested and ruddy man of thirty-five, with a look of indignant anxiety in his iron-gray eyes, rode up to the brigade commander.

"This is very annoying, Colonel," he said. "I am losing my men without using them. That last tree fell into my command."

"Are they firing toward our left?" asked Waldron.

"Not a shot."

"Very good," said the chief, with a sigh of contentment. "If we can only keep them occupied in this direction! By the way, let your men lie down under the fallen tree, as far as it will go. It will protect them from others."

Colburn rode back to his regiment. Waldron looked impatiently at his watch. At that moment

a fierce burst of line firing arose in front, followed and almost overborne by a long-drawn yell, the scream of charging men. Waldron put up his watch, glanced excitedly at Fitz Hugh, and smiled.

"I must forgive or forget," the latter could not help saying to himself. "All the rest of life is nothing compared with this."

"Captain," said Waldron, "ride off to the left at full speed. As soon as you hear firing at the shoulder of the ridge, return instantly and let me know."

Fitz Hugh dashed away. Three minutes carried him into perfect peace, beyond the whistling of ball or the screeching of shell. On the right was a tranquil, wide waving of foliage, and on the left a serene landscape of cultivated fields, with here and there an embowered farm-house. Only for the clamor of artillery and musketry far behind him, he could not have believed in the near presence of battle, of blood and suffering and triumphant death. But suddenly he heard to his right, assailing and slaughtering the tranquillity of nature, a tumultuous outbreak of file-firing, mingled with savage yells. He wheeled, drove spurs into his horse, and flew back to Waldron. As he re-entered the wood he met wounded men streaming through it, a few marching alertly upright, many more crouching and groaning, some clinging to their less injured comrades, but all haggard in face and ghastly.

"Are we winning?" he hastily asked of one man who held up a hand with three fingers gone and the bones projecting in sharp spikes through mangled flesh.

"All right, Sir ; sailing in," was the answer.

"Is the brigade commander all right?" he inquired of another who was winding a bloody handkerchief around his arm.

"Straight ahead, Sir ; hurrah for Waldron !" responded the soldier, and almost in the same instant fell lifeless with a fresh ball through his head.

"Hurrah for him !" Fitz Hugh answered frantically, plunging on through the underwood. He found Waldron with Colburn, the two conversing tranquilly in their saddles amid hissing bullets and dropping branches.

"Move your regiment forward now," the brigade commander was saying ; "but halt it in the edge of the wood."

"Shan't I relieve Gildersleeve if he gets beaten ?" asked the subordinate officer eagerly.

"No. The regiments on the left will help him out. I want your men and Peck's for the fight on top of the hill. Of course the rebels will try to retake it ; then I shall call for you."

Fitz Hugh now approached and said, "Colonel, the Seventh has attacked in force."

"Good !" answered Waldron, with that sweet smile of his which thanked people who brought him pleasant news. "I thought I heard his fire.

Gahogan will be on their right rear in ten minutes. Then we shall get the ridge. Ride back now to Major Bradley, and tell him to bring his Napoleons through the wood, and set two of them to shelling the enemy's centre. Tell him my idea is to amuse them, and keep them from changing front."

Again Fitz Hugh galloped off as before on a comfortably safe errand, safer at all events than many errands of that day. "This man is sparing my life," he said to himself. "Would to God I knew how to spare his!"

He found Bradley lunching on a gun caisson, and delivered his orders. "Something to do at last, eh?" laughed the rosy-cheeked youngster. "The smallest favors thankfully received. Won't you take a bite of rebel chicken, Captain? This rebellion must be put down. No? Well, tell the Colonel I am moving on, and John Brown's soul not far ahead."

When Fitz Hugh returned to Waldron he found him outside of the wood, at the base of the long incline which rose into the rebel position. About the slope were scattered prostrate forms, most numerous near the bottom, some crawling slowly rearward, some quiescent. Under the brow of the ridge, decimated and broken into a mere skirmish line sheltered in knots and singly, behind rocks and knolls and bushes, lay the Fourteenth Regiment, keeping up a steady, slow fire. From the edge above, smokily dim against a pure, blue

heaven, answered another rattle of musketry, incessant, obstinate, and spiteful. The combatants on both sides were lying down ; otherwise neither party could have lasted ten minutes. From Fitz Hugh's point of view not a Confederate uniform could be seen. But the smoke of their rifles made a long gray line, which was disagreeably visible and permanent ; and the sharp *whit ! whit !* of their bullets continually passed him, and cheeped away in the leafage behind.

"Our men can't get on another inch," he ventured to say to his commander. "Wouldn't it be well for me to ride up and say a cheering word?"

"Every battle consists largely in waiting," replied Waldron thoughtfully. "They have undoubtedly brought up a reserve to face Thomas. But when Gahogan strikes the flank of the reserve, we shall win."

"I wish you would take shelter," begged Fitz Hugh. "Everything depends on your life."

"My life has been both a help and a hurt to my fellow-creatures," sighed the brigade commander. "Let come what will to it."

He glanced upward with an expression of profound emotion ; he was evidently fighting two battles, an outward and an inward one.

Presently he added, "I think the musketry is increasing on the left. Does it strike you so?"

He was all eagerness again, leaning forward with an air of earnest listening, his face deeply flushed and his eye brilliant. Of a sudden the combat

above rose and swelled into higher violence. There was a clamor far away—it seemed nearly a mile away—over the hill. Then the nearer musketry, first Thomas' on the shoulder of the ridge, next Gildersleeve's in front, caught fire and raged with new fury.

Waldron laughed outright. "Gahogan has reached them," he said to one of his staff who had just rejoined him. "We shall all be up there in five minutes. Tell Colburn to bring on his regiment slowly."

Then, turning to Fitz Hugh, he added, "Captain, we will ride forward."

They set off at a walk, now watching the smoking brow of the eminence, now picking their way among dead and wounded. Suddenly there was a shout above them and a sudden diminution of the firing; and looking upward, they saw the men of the Fourteenth running confusedly toward the summit. Without a word the brigade commander struck spurs into his horse and dashed up the long slope at a run, closely followed by his enemy and aid. What they saw when they overtook the straggling, running, panting, screaming pell-mell of the Fourteenth was victory!

The entire right wing of the Confederates, attacked on three sides at once, placed at enormous disadvantage, completely outgeneraled, had given way in confusion, was retreating, breaking, and flying. There were lines yet of dirty gray or butternut; but they were few, meagre, fluctuat-

ing, and recoiling, and there were scattered and scurrying men in hundreds. Three veteran and gallant regiments had gone all to wreck under the shock of three similar regiments far more intelligently directed. A strong position had been lost because the heroes who held it could not perform the impossible feat of forming successively two fresh fronts under a concentric fire of musketry. The inferior brain power had confessed the superiority of the stronger one.

On the victorious side there was wild, clamorous, fierce exultation. The hurrying, shouting, firing soldiers, who noted their commander riding among them, swung their rifles or their tattered hats at him, and screamed "Hurrah!" No one thought of the Confederate dead under foot, nor of the Union dead who dotted the slope behind. "What are you here for, Colonel?" shouted rough old Gildersleeve, one leg of his trousers dripping blood. "We can do it alone."

"It is a battle won," laughed Fitz Hugh, almost worshipping the man whom he had come to slay.

"It is a battle won, but not used," answered Waldron. "We haven't a gun yet, nor a flag. Where is the cavalry? Why isn't Stilton here? He must have got afoul of the enemy's horse, and been obliged to beat it off. Can anybody hear anything of Stilton?"

"Let him go," roared old Grumps. "The infantry don't want any help."

"Your regiment has suffered, Colonel," answered Waldron, glancing at the scattered files of the Fourteenth. "Halt it and reorganize it, and let it fall in with the right of the First when Peck comes up. I shall replace you with the Fifth. Send your Adjutant back to Colburn and tell him to hurry along. Those fellows are making a new front over there," he added, pointing to the centre of the hill. "I want the Fifth, Seventh, and Tenth in *échelon* as quickly as possible. And I want that cavalry. Lieutenant," turning to one of his staff, "ride off to the left and find Colonel Stilton. Tell him that I need a charge in ten minutes."

Presently cannon opened from that part of the ridge still held by the Confederates, the shells tearing through or over the dissolving groups of their right wing, and cracking viciously above the heads of the victorious Unionists. The explosions followed each other with stunning rapidity, and the shrill whirring of the splinters was ominous. Men began to fall again in the ranks or to drop out of them wounded. Of all this Waldron took no further note than to ride hastily to the brow of the ridge and look for his own artillery.

"See how he attends to iverything himself," said Major Gahogan, who had cantéred up to the side of Fitz Hugh. "It's just a matther of plain business, an' he looks after it loike a business man. Did ye see us, though, Captin, whin we come in on their right flank? By George, we murdered um.

There's more'n a hundred lyin' in hapes back there. As for old Stilton, I just caught sight of um behind that wood to our left, an' he's makin' for the enemy's right rair. He'll have lots o' prisoners in half an hour."

When Waldron returned to the group he was told of his cavalry's whereabouts, and responded to the information with a smile of satisfaction.

"Bradley is hurrying up," he said, "and Taylor is pushing their left smartly. They will make one more tussle to recover their line of retreat ; but we shall smash them from end to end and take every gun."

He galloped now to his infantry, and gave the word "Forward !" The three regiments which composed the *échelon* were the Fifth on the right, the Seventh fifty yards to the rear and left of the Fifth, the Tenth to the rear and left of the Seventh. It was behind the Fifth, that is the foremost battalion, that the brigade commander posted himself.

"Do *you* mean to stay here, Colonel ?" asked Fitz Hugh, in surprise and anxiety.

"It is a certain victory now," answered Waldron, with a singular glance upward. "My life is no longer important. I prefer to do my duty to the utmost in the sight of all men."

"I shall follow you and do mine, Sir," said the Captain, much moved, he could scarcely say by what emotions, they were so many and conflicting.

"I want you other wheres. Ride to Colonel

Taylor at once, and hurry him up the hill. Tell him the enemy have greatly weakened their left. Tell him to push up everything, infantry, and cavalry, and artillery, and to do it in haste."

"Colonel, this is saving my life against my will," remonstrated Fitz Hugh.

"Go!" ordered Waldron, imperiously. "Time is precious."

Fitz Hugh dashed down the slope to the right at a gallop. The brigade commander turned tranquilly, and followed the march of his *échelon*. The second and decisive crisis of the little battle was approaching, and to understand it we must glance at the ground on which it was to be fought. Two hostile lines were marching toward each other along the broad, gently rounded crest of the hill and at right angles to its general course. Between these lines, but much the nearest to the Union troops, a spacious road came up out of the forest in front, crossed the ridge, swept down the smooth decline in rear, and led to a single wooden bridge over a narrow but deep rivulet. On either hand the road was hedged in by a close board fence, four feet or so in height. It was for the possession of this highway that the approaching lines were about to shed their blood. If the Confederates failed to win it, all their artillery would be lost, and their army captured or dispersed.

The two parties came on without firing. The soldiers on both sides were veterans, cool, obedient to orders, intelligent through long service, and

able to reserve all their resources for a short-range and final struggle. Moreover, the fences as yet partially hid them from each other, and would have rendered all aim for the present vague and uncertain.

“Forward, Fifth!” shouted Waldron. “Steady. Reserve your fire.” Then, as the regiment came up to the fence, he added, “Halt; right dress. Steady, men.”

Meantime he watched the advancing array with an eager gaze. It was a noble sight, full of moral sublimity, and worthy of all admiration. The long, lean, sunburned, weather-beaten soldiers in ragged gray stepped forward, superbly, their ranks loose, but swift and firm, the men leaning forward in their haste, their tattered slouch hats pushed backward, their whole aspect business-like and virile. Their line was three battalions strong, far outflanking the Fifth, and at least equal to the entire *échelon*. When within thirty or forty yards of the further fence they increased their pace to nearly a double-quick, many of them stooping low in hunter fashion, and a few firing. Then Waldron rose in his stirrups and yelled, “Battalion! ready—aim—aim low. Fire!”

There was a stunning roar of three hundred and fifty rifles, and a deadly screech of bullets. But the smoke rolled out, the haste to reload was intense, and none could mark what execution was done. Whatever the Confederates may have suffered, they bore up under the volley, and they came

on. In another minute each of those fences, not more than twenty-five yards apart, was lined by the shattered fragment of a regiment, each firing as fast as possible into the face of the other. The Fifth bled fearfully : it had five of its ten company commanders shot dead in three minutes ; and its loss in other officers and in men fell scarcely short of this terrible ratio. On its left the Seventh and the Tenth were up, pouring in musketry, and receiving it in a fashion hardly less sanguinary. No one present had ever seen, or ever afterward saw, such another close and deadly contest.

But the strangest thing in this whole wonderful fight was the conduct of the brigade commander. Up and down the rear of the lacerated Fifth Waldron rode thrice, spurring his plunging and wounded horse close to the yelling and fighting file-closers, and shouting in a piercing voice encouragement to his men. Stranger still, considering the character which he had borne in the army, and considering the evil deed for which he was to account on the morrow, were the words which he was distinctly and repeatedly heard to utter. " Stand steady, men—God is with us ! " was the extraordinary battle-cry of this backslidden clergyman, this sinner above many.

And it was a prophecy of victory. Bradley ran up his Napoleons on the right in the nick of time, and, although only one of them could be brought to bear, it was enough ; the grape raked the Confederate left, broke it, and the battle was over. In

five minutes more their whole array was scattered, and the entire position open to galloping cavalry, seizing guns, standards, and prisoners.

It was in the very moment of triumph, just as the stubborn Southern line reeled back from the fence in isolated clusters, that the miraculous impunity of Waldron terminated, and he received his death wound. A quarter of an hour later Fitz Hugh found a sorrowful group of officers gazing from a little distance upon their dying commander.

"Is the Colonel hit?" he asked, shocked and grieved, incredible as the emotion may seem.

"Don't go near him," called Gildersleeve, who, it will be remembered, knew or guessed his errand in camp. "The Chaplain and surgeon are there. Let him alone."

"He's going to render his account," added Gahogan. "An' whatever he's done wrong, he's made it square to-day. Let um lave it to his brigade."

Adjutant Wallis, who had been blubbering aloud, who had cursed the rebels and the luck energetically, and who had also been trying to pray inwardly, groaned out, "This is our last victory. You see if it ain't. Bet you two to one."

"Hush, man!" replied Gahogan. "We'll win our share of um, though we'll have to work harder for it. We'll have to do more ourselves, an' get less done for us in the way of tactics."

"That so, Major," whimpered a drummer, looking up from his duty of attending to a wounded

comrade. "He knowed how to put his men in the right place, and his men knowed when they was in the right place. But it's goin' to be uphill through the steepest part of hell the rest of the way."

Soldiers, some of them weeping, some of them bleeding, arrived constantly to inquire after their commander, only to be sent quietly back to their ranks or to the rear. Around lay other men—dead men, and senseless, groaning men—all for the present unnoticed. Everything, except the distant pursuit of the cavalry, waited for Waldron to die. Fitz Hugh looked on silently, with the tears of mingled emotions in his eyes, and with hopes and hatreds expiring in his heart. The surgeon supported the expiring victor's head, while Chaplain Colquhoun knelt beside him, holding his hand and praying audibly. Of a sudden the petition ceased, both bent hastily toward the wounded man, and after what seemed a long time exchanged whispers. Then the Chaplain rose, came slowly toward the now advancing group of officers, his hands outspread toward heaven in an attitude of benediction, and tears running down his haggard white face.

"I trust, dear friends," he said, in a tremulous voice, "that all is well with our brother and commander. His last words were, 'God is with us.'"

"Oh! but, man, *that* isn't well," broke out Gahogan, in a groan. "What did ye pray for his sowl for? Why didn't ye pray for his loife?"

Fitz Hugh turned his horse and rode silently away. The next day he was seen journeying rearward by the side of an ambulance, within which lay what seemed a strangely delicate boy, insensible, and, one would say, mortally ill.

SPLIT ZEPHYR.

AN ATTENUATED YARN SPUN BY THE FATES.

BY HENRY A. BEERS.

IT was the evening of Commencement Day. The old church on the green, which had rung for many consecutive hours with the eloquence of slim young gentlemen in evening dress, exhorting the Scholar in Politics or denouncing the Gross Materialism of the Age, was at last empty and still. As it drew the dewy shadows softly about its eaves and filled its rasped interior with soothing darkness, it bore a whimsical likeness to some aged horse which, having been pestered all day with flies, was now feeding in peace along the dim pasture.

It was Clay who suggested this resemblance, and we all laughed appreciatively, as we used to do in those days at Clay's clever sayings. There were

five of us strolling down the diagonal walk to our farewell supper at "Ambrose's." Arrived at that refectory, we found it bare of guests and had things quite to ourselves. After supper, we took our coffee out in the little court-yard, where a fountain dribbled, and the flutter of the grape-leaves on the trellises in the night wind invited to confidences.

"Well, Armstrong," began Doddridge, "where are you going to spend the vacation?"

"Vacation!" answered Armstrong; "vacations are over for me."

"You're not going to work for your living at once?" inquired Berkeley.

"I'm going to work to-morrow," replied Armstrong, emphatically: "I'm going down to New York to enter a law office."

"I thought you had some notion of staying here and taking a course of graduate study."

"No, sir! The sooner a man gets into harness, the better. I've wasted enough time in the last four years. The longer a man loafs around in this old place, under pretense of reading and that kind of thing, the harder it is for him to take hold."

Armstrong was a rosy little man, with yellow hair and light eyes. His expression was one of irresolute good nature. His temper was sanguine and expansive, and he had been noted in college for anything but concentration of pursuit. He was gregarious in his habits, susceptible and subject to sudden enthusiasms. His good nature

made him a victim to all the bores and idlers in the class, and his room became a favorite resort for men on their way to recitation, being on the ground floor and near the lecture-rooms. They would drop in about half an hour before the bell rang, and make up a little game of "penny ante" around Armstrong's center-table. In these diversions he seldom took part, as he had given it out publicly that he was "studying for a stand"; but his abstinence from the game in no wise damped the spirits of his guests. Occasionally his presence would receive the notice of the company somewhat as follows :

No. 1. "Make less noise, fellows : Charley is digging out that Puckle lesson."

No. 2. "You go into the bedroom, Charley, and shut the door, and then you won't be bothered by the racket."

No. 3. "Oh, hang the Puckle ! Come and take a hand, Charley. We'll let you in this pool without an ante."

No. 4. "Why don't you get a new pack of cards, Charley ? It's a disgrace to you to keep such a dirty lot of old pasteboards for your friends."

In face of which abuse, Armstrong was as helpless as Telemachus under the visitation of the suitors. The resolute air with which he now declared his intention of grappling with life had therefore something comic about it, and Berkeley said, rather incredulously :

"I suppose you'll keep up your reading along with your law?"

"No," replied the other; "Themis is a jealous mistress. No; I'm going to bone right down to it."

"Haven't you changed your ideal of life lately?" asked Clay, a little scornfully.

"Perhaps I have," said Armstrong, "perhaps I've had to."

"What *is* your ideal of life?" I inquired.

"Well, I'll tell you," he answered, draining his coffee-cup solemnly, and putting it down with the manner of a man who has made up his mind. The rest of us arranged ourselves in attitudes of attention. "My ideal is independence," began Armstrong. "I want to live my own life; and as the first condition of independence is money, I'm going for money. Culture and taste, and all that, are well enough when a man can afford it, but for a poor man it means just so many additional wants which he can't gratify. My father is an educated man; a country minister with a small salary and a large family; and his education, instead of being a blessing, has been an actual curse to him. He has pined for all sorts of things which he couldn't have—books, engravings, foreign travel, leisure for study, nice people and nice things about him. I've made up my mind that, whatever else I may be, I won't be poor, and I won't be a minister, and I won't have a wife and brats hanging to me. I tell you that, next to ill health, poverty is the worst thing

that can happen to a man. All the sentimental grievances that are represented in novels and poetry as the deepest of human afflictions,—disappointed ambitions, death of friends, loss of faith, estrangements, having your girl go back on you,—they don't signify very long if a man has sound health and a full purse. The ministers and novel writers and fellows that preach the sentimental view of life don't believe it themselves. It's a kind of professional or literary quackery with them. Just let them feel the pinch of poverty, and then offer them a higher salary or a chance to make a little 'sordid gain' in some way, and see how quick they'll accept the call to 'a higher sphere of usefulness.' Berk, hand over a match, will you; this cigar has gone out."

"Loud cries of 'We will—we will'!" said Berkeley. "But can it be? Has the poick turned cynic, and the sickly sentimentalist become a materialist and a misogynist?"

(Armstrong was our class poet, and had worried the official muse on Presentation Day to the utterance of some four hundred lines filled with allusions to Alma Mater, Friendship's Altar, the Elms of Yale, etc. His piece on that occasion had been "pronounced, by a well-known literary gentleman who was present, equal to the finest productions of our own Willis.")

"I'll bet the cigars," said Doddridge, "that Armstrong marries the first girl he sees in New York."

"Yes," said Clay, "his boarding-house keeper's daughter."

"And has a dozen children before he is forty," added Berkeley; "a dozen kids, and all of them girls. Charley is sure to be a begetter of wenches."

"And writes birthday odes 'To My Infant Daughter' for the 'Home Journal,'" continued Clay.

"No, no," said the victim of this banter, shaking his head solemnly. "I shall give no hostages to Fortune. I mean to live snug and carry as little sail as possible: to leave only the narrowest margin out for Fate to tread on. The man who has the fewest exposed points leads, on the whole, the happiest life. How can a man enjoy himself freely when a piece of defective plumbing, the bursting of a toy pistol, the carelessness of a nurse, may plunge him into a life-long sorrow? I don't say it's a very noble life that I propose to myself, but it's a safe one. I'm too nervous and anxious to stand the responsibilities of matrimony."

"If you can't stand responsibility," said Doddridge, "I don't see why you choose the law for a profession. You don't seem to me cut out for a lawyer anyway. I always thought you meant to be some kind of a literary chap."

"Yes," said Berkeley, "why don't you go for a snug berth under the government, or study for a tutorship here? That's the life that would suit you, old man."

"Not at all," answered Armstrong; "I have a horror of any salaried position, or of any position where a man is obliged to conform his habits and opinions to other people's. It is the worst sort of dependence. Now a lawyer in successful practice, and especially if he is a bachelor, is about as independent as a man can be. His relations with his clients are merely professional, and what he does or thinks privately is nobody's business."

"If you are going to be a mere lawyer," asked Clay, "what becomes of your education and your intellectual satisfactions, etc.?"

"A man can get his best intellectual satisfactions out of the work of his profession," answered Armstrong. "Besides, as to that, there's time enough. Fifteen years of solid work will enable one to put by a fair competence, if he lives carefully and has no one but himself to support; and then he will be free to take up a hobby. Oh, I shall cultivate a hobby or two after awhile. It keeps the mind healthy to have some interest of the kind outside of one's business. I may take to book-collecting or numismatics or raising orchids. Perhaps I may become an authority on ancient armor; time enough for that by and by. And then I can cut over to Europe every summer if I like, and no one to interfere with my down-sittings or my up-risings, my goings-out or my comings-in. Do you know," he went on, after a pause, "how I always look to myself in the glass of the future? I figure myself like old Tulkinghorn, in

'Bleak House,'—going down into his reverberating vaults for a bottle of choice vintage, after the work of the day, and then sitting quietly in the twilight in his dusky, old-fashioned law chambers, sipping his wine while the room fills with the fragrance of southern grapes. The gay old silver-top !'

There was silence for a few minutes after Armstrong had finished his declaration. It was broken by Berkeley, who had risen, and was walking up and down in front of the fountain with his hands thrust into his pockets.

"You couldn't lead that sort of life if you tried," he said ; "you aren't built for it."

"Don't you make any mistake," rejoined the other ; "it's the sort of life I'm going to live."

"It's a cowardly life," retorted Berkeley.

"Did I say it wasn't ? I said it was safe. You can call it what you like."

"Well," replied Berkeley, seating himself again, "my ideal career is just the opposite of that."

"Suppose you explain yours, then," said Armstrong.

Berkeley hesitated a few moments before beginning. He was a lean, tallish fellow, with a Scotch cast of countenance, a small blue eye, high cheek bones, a freckled skin, and whity-brown hair. He had a dry, cautious humor, fed by much out-of-the-way reading. He had been distinguished in college by methodical habits, a want of ambition, a disposition to keep to himself, and a mixture of selfishness and *bonhomie* which made him a cold

friend but an agreeable companion. It was therefore with some surprise that we heard him deliver himself as follows :

“ I believe that the greatest mistake a man can make is in not getting enough out of life. I want to lead a full life, to have a wide experience, to develop my whole nature to the utmost, to touch mankind at the largest possible number of points. I want adventure, change, excitement, emotion, suffering even,—I don't care what, so long as it is not stagnation. Just consider what there is on this planet to be seen, learned, enjoyed, and what a miserably small share of it most people appropriate. Why, there are men in my village who have never been outside the county and seldom out of the township ; who have never heard a word of any language but English ; never seen a city or a mountain or the ocean—or, indeed, any body of water bigger than Fresh Pond or the Hogganum River ; never been in a theatre, steamboat, library, or cathedral. Cathedral ! Their conception of a church is limited to the white wooden meeting-house at ‘ the center.’ Their art-gallery is the wagon of a travelling photographer. Their metropolitan hotel is the stoop and bar-room of the ‘ Uncas House.’ Their university is the unpainted school-house on the hill. Their literature is the weekly newspaper from the county town. But take the majority of educated men even. What a rusty, small kind of existence they lead ! They are in a rut, just the same as the others, only

the rut is a trifle wider. If I had my way I would never do the same work or talk with the same people—hardly live in the same place for two days running. Life is too short to do a thing twice. When I come to the end of mine I don't want to say *J'ai manqué la vie* ; but make my brag, with the Wife of Bath,

‘Unto this day it doth myn herte bote
That I have had my world as in my time.’”

“Well, how are you going to do all those fine things?” inquired Armstrong. “For instance, that about not living in one place two days running. I’m afraid you’ll find that inconvenient, not to say expensive.”

“Oh, you mustn’t take me too literally. I may have to travel on foot or take a steerage passage, but I shall keep going all the same. I haven’t made any definite plans yet. I shall probably strike for something in the diplomatic line,—secretary of legation, or some small consulship perhaps. But the principle is the main thing, and the principle is : Don’t do anything because it’s the nearest and easiest and most obvious thing to do, but make up your mind to get the best. Look at the lazy way in which men accept their circumstances. There is the matter of acquaintance, for instance—we let chance determine it. We know the men that we can’t help knowing,—the ones in the next house, cousins and second cousins, business con-

nections, etc. Here at college, now, we get acquainted with the fellows at the eating club or in the same society, or those who happen to sit next us in the class-room, because their names begin with the same letter. That's it ; it's just a sample of our whole life. Our friendships, like everything else about us, are determined by the alphabet. We go with the Z's because some arbitrary system of classification has put us among them, instead of fighting our way up to the A's, where we naturally belong. The consequence is that one's friends are mostly dreadful bores."

"I'm sure we are all much obliged to you," murmured Clay, parenthetically.

"There are about two or three thousand people in the world," continued Berkeley, "supremely worth knowing. Why shouldn't *I* know them? — I will ! Everybody knows two or three thousand people,—mostly very stupid people,—or, rather, he lets them know him. Why shouldn't he use some choice in the matter? Why not know Thackeray and Carlyle, Lord Palmerston and the Pope, and the Emperor of China and all the great statesmen, authors, African explorers, military commanders, artists, hereditary nobles, actresses, wits and belles of the best society, instead of putting up with Tom, Dick, and Harry?"

"Berkeley, 'with whom the bell-mouthed flask had wrought !'" exclaimed Clay. "Decidedly, Berk, you should take your coffee without cognac."

"Let me suggest," put in Doddridge, "that

some of those parties you mentioned are not so easy to get introductions to."

"Oh, I say again, you mustn't take me too literally. But even the top swells are easier to know than you think. All that is wanted is a little cheek. But take it in a smaller way; say that we resolve to cultivate the best society within our reach. Doubtless there are numbers of interesting and distinguished people right here in New Haven whose acquaintance it would be worth while to have. But how long would you beggars live here without making the least effort to look them out, and meanwhile put up with the same old every-day bores—like me, or Polisson here? And it's the same way with marriage. A fellow blunders into matrimony with the first attractive girl that gives him the opportunity. He knows, if he takes the time to think about it, that there are a thousand others better than she, if he will wait and look through the world a little. 'Juxtaposition in fine,' as Clough says."

"Of course, with such a brilliant destiny before you, *you'll* never marry," said I.

"Yes, I think I shall. I fancy that the noblest possibilities of life are never realized without marriage. Yes, I can think of nothing finer than to have a lot of manly boys and sweet girls growing up around one. But when I marry it shall be so as to give completeness and expansion to life, not narrowness and dullness. I shall never marry and settle down. Settle down! What a damna-

ble expression that is ! A man ought to settle *up*. I mean to have my fling first, too. I should like to gamble a bit at Baden-Baden. I should like to go out to Colorado and have a lick at mining speculations. I want to rough it some too, and see how life is lived close to the bone : ship for a voyage before the mast ; enlist for a campaign or two somewhere and have joy of battle ; join the gypsies or the Mormons or the Shakers for awhile, and taste all the queerness of things. And then I want to float for another while on the very top-most crest of society. I want to fight a duel or two, elope with a marquise, do a little of everything for the experience's sake, as a man ought to take opium once in his life just to know how it feels."

Whether it was indeed the cognac, or only the unusual excitement attending this outburst of pent-up fire, Berkeley's cheek had got a flush upon it. Perhaps, too, it was owing to the influences of the day and the hour, the splash of the fountain, the rustle of the vine-leaves, and the wavering shadows which played about the court-yard as the gas-jets flickered in the breeze of night, that made his boastful words seem less extravagantly out of character than they otherwise would. The silence which followed his speech was broken by Clay, who sat with his foot on the rim of the fountain, balancing on the hind legs of his chair, and looking thoughtfully at the slender jet as it rose and fell. He still wore the dress suit in which he had

figured on the Commencement platform in the afternoon, and which set off the aristocratic grace of his slight figure. There was a pale intellectual light in his face, and his black eyes had the glow of genius.

"I think," he began, "that Berkeley makes a mistake in confounding a full life with a restless one. I believe in a full experience too, but the satisfactions should be inward ones. Take the matter of foreign travel, for one thing, on which you lay so much stress. It is a great stimulus to the imagination, no doubt ; but then foreign countries are accessible to the imagination by other means—through books and art, for example. I think it likely that the reality is, quite as often as not, disappointing. Place, after all, is indifferent. 'The soul is its own place' : you can't get rid of yourself by going abroad, and it's himself that a man gets sooner tired of than of anything else. Then as to acquaintances, I don't know that I should care to know personally such men as Thackeray and Carlyle, and the big composers and artists and other people that you mentioned. It might be equally disenchanting. They put the best of themselves into their books, or pictures, or music. I certainly would not seek their society through a formal introduction, at all events. It is hard for a small man to keep his self-respect in face of a great man when he obtains his acquaintance as a special favor. If I could meet some of those fellows, quite naturally and accidentally, on equal

terms, I might like it, but not otherwise. But, leaving that point out of account, I think that the career which Berkeley proposes to himself would turn out very hollow. It would result in the superficial gratification of the curiosity and the senses ; and, as soon as the novelty got rubbed off, what is there left ?”

“ So then,” said Berkeley, “ you’ve swung into line with Armstrong, have you ? You mean to plod along in some professional rut too. What has got into all our idealists ?”

“ Not by any means,” answered Clay. “ Armstrong talks about independence, and yet destines himself to the worst kind of dependence—slavery to money-getting. Most people, it seems to me, spend the best part of their lives not in living, but in getting the means to live. We’ll give Armstrong, say twenty years, to lay up enough money to retire on and begin to live. What sort of a position will he be in then to enjoy his independence ? His nature will have got so subdued to what it works in that the only safety for him will be to keep on at the law.”

“ All right ! Then I’ll keep on,” interjected Armstrong.

“ What the devil do *you* mean to do then ?” asked Berkeley of Clay.

“ I don’t quite know yet,” replied the latter. “ I shall ‘ loaf and invite my soul ’ whenever I feel like it. I shall live as I go along, and not postpone it till I am forty. I sha’n’t put myself into

any mill that will grind me just so much a day. I need my leisure too badly for that. I presume I shall spend most of my time at first in reading and walking. Then, whenever I think of anything to write I shall write it, and if I can sell what I write to some publisher or other, so much the better. If not, go on as before."

"Meanwhile, where will your bread and butter come from?" asked Armstrong.

"Oh, I sha'n't starve. I can get some sort of hack work—something that won't take much of my time, and which I can do with my left hand. But the great point, after all, is to make your wants simple; to live like an Arab, content with a few dates and a swallow from the gourd. 'Lessen your denominator.' It's easier than raising your numerator, and the quotient is the same."

"No, it's not the same," Berkeley retorted. "Renunciation and enjoyment are not the same. It makes a heap of difference whether you have a thing or simply do without it. The plain living and high thinking philosophy may do for Clay, whose mind to him a kingdom is; but a fellow like me, whose mind is only a small Central American republic, can't live on the revenues of the spirit. The fact is, Clay, you've read too much Emerson. I went into that myself once, but I soon found out that it wouldn't wear. I want mine thicker. The worst thing about the career of a literary man or an artist is that if he fails there are no compensations; and success is mighty un-

certain. Nobody doubts that you are smart enough, Clay, and I am sure we expect great things of you, whatever line you take up. But, for the sake of the argument, suppose you have grubbed along in a small way, living on crusts and water, till you are fifty, without doing any really good work. Then where are you? You haven't had any fun. You've no other string to your bow. You haven't that practical experience of the world which would enable you to turn your hand to something else. You have no influence or reputation; for, of all poor things, poor art of any kind is the worst—hateful to gods and men and columns. In short, where are you? You're out of the dance; you don't count."

"Yes," added Armstrong, "and you've no professional success or solid standing in the community; and, what's worse, you've no money, which might make up for the want of all the rest."

"I don't think you get my meaning. I may fail," said Clay, proudly; "I may never even try to succeed, in your sense of the word. I decline all mean competitions and all low views of success. The noblest ideal of life—at least, the noblest to me—is self-culture in the high meaning of the word; the harmonious development of one's whole nature. Armstrong has drawn a picture of his future in the likeness of old Tulkington. I suppose we are all accustomed to put our anticipations into some such concrete shape before our mind's eye. The typical situation which I am fond of

imagining is something like this : I like to fancy myself sitting in a dark old upper room in some remote farm-house, at the close of a winter day, after three or four hours of steady reading or writing. The room is full of books—the *best* books. There is a little fire on the hearth, there is a dingy curtain at the window. It is solitary and still, and when the light gets too scant to let me read any more, I fill my pipe, and go and stand in the window. Outside, there is a row of leafless elms, and beyond that a dim, wide landscape of lakes and hills, and beyond that a red, windy sunset. I can sit in that window and smoke my pipe and have my own thoughts till the hills grow black. There is no one to say to me ‘Go’ or ‘Come’ ; no patient to visit ; no confounded case on the docket next morning at nine ; no distasteful, mean, slavish job of any kind. How can I fail to have thoughts worth the thinking, and to live a rich and free life when I breathe every day the bracing air of nature and the great poets ? Isn’t such a life in itself the best kind of success, even if a man accomplishes nothing in particular that you can put your hand on ?”

“ Yes, I know,” said Armstrong, taking a long breath. “ I have felt that way too. But a man has got to put all that sternly behind him and do the world’s work for the world’s wages, if he means to amount to anything. It’s only a finer kind of self-indulgence, after all—egoistic Hedonism and that sort of thing.”

“It won’t be all standing at windows and looking at sunsets,” added Doddridge. “Has it ever occurred to you that, before entering on a life of self-denial and devotion to rather vague ideals, a man ought to be mighty sure of himself? Can you keep up the culture business without growing in on yourself unhealthily, and then getting sick of inaction? Don’t you think there will be times of disappointment and doubt when you look around and see fellows without half your talents getting ahead of you in the world?”

“Of course,” answered Clay, “I shall have to make sacrifices, and I shall have to stick to them when made. But there have always been plenty of people willing to make similar sacrifices for similar compensations. Men have gone out into the wilderness or shut themselves up in the cloister for opportunities of study or self-communion, or for other objects which were perhaps at bottom no more truly devotional than mine. Nowadays such opportunities may be had by any man who will keep himself free from the servitude of a bread-winning profession. It is not necessary now to cry *Ecce in deserto* or *Ecce in penetralibus*. Oh, I shall have my dark days; but whenever the blue devils get thick I shall take to the woods and return to sanity.”

“You mean to live in the country, then?” I inquired.

“Yes; most of the time, at any rate. Nature is fully half of life to me.”

Again there was a pause.

"Well, you next, Polisson," said Armstrong, finally. "Let's hear what your programme is."

"Oh, nothing in the least interesting," I replied. "My future is all cut and dried. I shall spend the next two years in the south of France—mainly at Lyons—to learn the details of the silk manufacture. Then I shall come home to go into my father's store for a year as a clerk in the importing department. At the close of that year the governor will take me in as junior partner, and I shall marry my second cousin. We shall live with my parents, and I am going to be very domestic, though, as a matter of form, I shall join one or two clubs. I shall go down town every morning at nine, and come up at five."

"Quite a neat little destiny," said Armstrong. "I wish I had your backing. Come, Dodd, what's yours? You're the only man left."

"I haven't made up my mind yet," said Doddridge, slowly.

He was a large, spare man, with a swarthy skin, a wide mouth, a dark, steady eye, and a long jaw. There was an appearance of power and will about him which was well borne out by his character. He had been a systematic though not a laborious student, and while maintaining a stand comfortably near the head of the class, had taken a course in the Law School during Senior year, doing his double duties with apparent ease. He was a constant speaker in the debates of the Linonian

Society, and the few who attended the meetings of that moribund school of eloquence spoke of Doddridge's speeches as oases in the waste of forensic dispute, being always distinguished by vigor and soundness, though without any literary quality, such as Clay's occasional performances had. Berkeley, who covered his own lazy and miscellaneous reading with the mask of eclecticism, and proclaimed his disbelief in a prescribed course of study, was wont to say that Doddridge was the only man that he knew who was using the opportunities given by the college for all they were worth, and really getting out of "the old curric'" that mental discipline which it professed to impart. Though rather taciturn, he was not unsocial, and was fond of his pipe in the evening. He liked a joke, especially if it was of a definite kind, and at some one's expense touching a characteristic weakness of the man. There was at bottom something a little hard about him, though every one agreed that he was a good fellow. We all felt sure that he would make a distinguished success in practical life; and we doubtless thought—if we thought about it at all—that with his clear foresight and habits of steady work, he had already decided upon his career. His words were therefore a surprise.

"What! you don't mean to say that you are going to drift, Dodd?" inquired Armstrong.

"Drift? Well, no; not exactly. I shall keep my steering apparatus well in hand, but I haven't decided yet what port to run for. There's no

hurry. I have an uncle in the Northwest in the lumber business, who would give me a chance. I may go out there and look about awhile at first. If it doesn't promise much, there is the law to fall back upon. My father has a fruit farm at Byzantium in western New York,—where I come from, you know,—and he is part owner of the Byzantium weekly 'Bugle.' I've no doubt I could get on as editor, and go to the Legislature. Or I might do worse than begin on the farm ; farming is looking up in that section. I may try several things till I find the right one."

"That's queer," said Armstrong. "I thought you had made up your mind to enter the Columbia Law School."

"Hardly," answered Doddridge, "though I may, after all. The main point is to keep yourself in readiness for any work, and take the best thing that turns up—like Berkeley here," he added, drily.

Armstrong looked at his watch and remarked that it was nearly midnight.

"Boys," said I, "in fifteen years from to-night let's have a supper here and see how each man of us has worked out his theory of life, and how he likes it as far as he has got."

"Oh, give us twenty," said Doddridge, laughing, as we all arose and prepared to break up. "No one accomplishes anything in this latitude before he is forty."

* * * * *

It was in effect just fifteen years from the summer of our graduation that I started out to look up systematically my quondam classmates and compare notes with them. The course of my own life had been quite other than I had planned. For one thing, I had lived in New Orleans and not in New York, and my occasions had led me seldom to the North. The first visit I paid was to Berkeley. I had heard that he was still unmarried, and that he had been for years settled, as minister, over a small Episcopal parish on the Hudson. The steamer landed me one summer afternoon at a little dock on the west bank ; and after obtaining from the dock-keeper precise directions for finding the parsonage, I set out on foot. After a walk of a mile along a road skirted by handsome country seats, but contrasting strangely in its loneliness with the broad thoroughfare of the river constantly occupied by long tows of barges and rafts, I came to the rectory gate. The house was a stone cottage, covered with trailers, and standing well back from the road. In the same inclosure, surrounded by a grove of firs, was a little stone chapel with high pitched roof and rustic belfry. In front of the house I spied a figure which I recognized as Berkeley. He was in his shirt-sleeves, and was pecking away with a hoe at the gravel walk, whistling meanwhile his old favorite 'Bonny Doon.' He turned as I came up the driveway, and regarded me at first without recognition. He, for his part, was little changed by time. There was

the same tall, narrow-shouldered, slightly stooping figure ; the face, smooth-shaved, with a spot of wintry red in the cheek, and the old humorous cast in the small blue eyes.

“ You don’t know me from Adam,” I said, pausing in front of him.

“ Ah !” he exclaimed, directly. “ Polisson, old man, upon my conscience I’m glad to see you, but I didn’t know you till you spoke. You’ve been having the yellow fever, haven’t you ? Come in—come into the house.”

We passed in through the porch, which was covered with sweet-pea vines trained on strings, and entered the library, where Berkeley resumed his coat. The room was lined with book-shelves loaded to the ceiling, while piles of literature had overflowed the cases and stood about on the floor in bachelor freedom. After the first greetings and inquiries, Berkeley carried my valise upstairs, and then returning, said :

“ I’m a methodical though not methodistical person, or rather parson (excuse the Fullerism) ; and as you have got to stay with me till I let you go, that is, several days at the least (don’t interrupt), I’ll keep a little appointment for the next hour, if you will excuse me. A boy comes three times a week to blow the bellows for my organ practice. Perhaps you would like to step into the church and hear me.”

I assented, and we went out into the yard and found the boy already waiting in the church

porch. Berkeley and his assistant climbed into the organ loft, while I seated myself in the chancel to listen. The instrument was small but sweet, and Berkeley really played very well. The interior of the little church was plain to bareness ; but the sun, which had fallen low, threw red lights on the upper part of the undecorated walls, and rich shadows darkened the lower half. Through the white, pointed windows I saw the trembling branches of the firs. I had been hurrying for a fortnight past over heated railways, treading fiery pavements, and lodging in red-hot city hotels. But now the music and the day's decline filled me with a sense of religious calm, and for a moment I envied Berkeley. After his practicing was over the organist locked the chapel door, and we paced up and down in the fir-grove on the matting of dark red needles, and watched the river, whose eastern half still shone in the evening light. After supper we sat out on the piazza, which commanded a view of the Hudson. Berkeley opened a bottle of Chablis and produced some very old and dry Manilla cheroots, and, leaning back in our wicker chairs, we proceeded to " talk Cosmos."

" You are very comfortably fixed here," I began ; " but this is not precisely what I expected to find you doing, after your declaration of principles, fifteen years ago, you may remember, on our Commencement night."

" Fifteen years ! So it is—so it is," he answered, with a sigh. " Well, *l'homme propose*, you know.

I don't quite remember what it was that I said on that occasion : dreadful nonsense, no doubt. As Thackeray says, a boy *is* an ass. Whatever it was, it proceeded, I suppose, from some temporary mood rather than from any permanent conviction ; though, to be sure, I slipped into this way of life almost by accident at first. But, being in, I have found it easy to continue. I am rather too apt, perhaps, to stay where I am put. I am a quietist by constitution." He paused, and I waited for him to enter upon a fuller and more formal apology. Finally, he went on much as follows :

"Just after I left college I made application through some parties at Washington for a foreign consulate. While I was waiting for the application to be passed on (it was finally unsuccessful), I came up here to visit my uncle, who was the rector of this parish. He was a widower, without any children, and the church was his hobby. It is a queer little affair, something like the old field-kirks or chapels of ease in some parts of England. It was built partly by my uncle and partly by a few New York families who have country places here, and who use it in the summer. This is all glebe land," he said, indicating, with a sweep of his hand, the twilight fields below the house sloping down toward the faintly glimmering river. "My uncle had a sort of prescription or lien by courtesy on the place. There's not much salary to speak of, but he had a nice plum of his own, and lived inexpensively. Well, that first summer I moped

about here, got acquainted with the summer residents, read a good deal of the time, took long walks into the interior,—a rough, aboriginal country, where they still talk Dutch,—and waited for an answer to my application. When it came at last, I fretted about it considerably, and was for starting off in search of something else. I had an idea of getting a place as botanist on Coprolite's survey of the Nth parallel, and I wrote to New Haven for letters. I thought it would be a good outdoor, horseback sort of life, and might lead to something better. But that fell through, and meanwhile the dominie kept saying: 'My dear fellow, don't be in too much of a hurry to begin. Young America goes so fast nowadays that it is like the dog in the hunting story,—a *leetle* bit ahead of the hare. Why not stay here for awhile and ripen—ripen?' The dominie had a good library,—all my old college favorites, old Burton, old Fuller, and Browne, etc., and it seemed the wisest course to follow his advice for the present. But in the fall my uncle had a slight stroke of paralysis, and really needed my help for awhile; so that what had been a somewhat aimless life, considered as loafing, became all at once a duty. At first he had a theological student, from somewhere across the river, come to stay in the house and read service for him on Sundays. But he was a ridiculous animal, whose main idea of a minister's duties was to intone the responses in a sonorous manner. He used to practice this on

week days in his surplice, and I remember especially the cadence with which he delivered the sentence : ' Yea, like a broken *wall* shall ye be and as a ruined *hedge*.'

" He got the huckleberry, as we used to say in college, on that particular text, and it has stuck by me ever since. The dominie fired him out after a fortnight, and one day said to me : ' Jack, why don't *you* study for orders and take up the succession here? You are a bookworm, and the life seems to be to your liking.' Of course, I declined very vigorously in the beginning, though offering to stay on so long as the dominie needed my help. I used to do lay reading on Sundays when he was too feeble. Gradually, ' the idea of the life did sweetly creep into my study of imagination.' The quaintness of the place appealed to me. And here was a future all cut out for me : no preliminary struggle, no contact with vulgar people, no cut-throat competition, but everything gentlemanly and independent about it. I had strong doubts touching my theology, and used to discuss them with my uncle ; but he said,—and said rightly, I now think,—' You young fellows in college fancy that it's a mighty fine, bold thing to effect radicalism and atheism, and the Lord knows what all ; but it won't stick to you when you get older. Experience will soften your heart, and you'll find after awhile that belief and doubt are not matters of the pure reason, but of the will. It is a question of *attitude*. Besides, the church is broad

enough to cover a good many private differences in opinion. It isn't as if you were going to be a blue-nosed Presbyterian. You can stay here and make your studies with me, instead of going into a seminary, and when you are ready to go before the bishop I'll see that you get the right send-off.' In short, here I am ! My uncle died two years after, when I was already in orders, and I've been here ever since."

"I should think you would get lonely sometimes, and make a strike for a city parish," I suggested.

"Why—no, I don't think I should care for ordinary parish work. The beauty of my position here is its uniqueness. In winter I keep the church open for the Aborigines till they get snowed up and stop coming, and then I put down to New York for a month or two of work at the Astor Library. Last winter I held service for two Sundays running with one boy for congregation. Finally I announced to him that the church would be closed until spring."

"What in the ——— : well, what do you find to do all alone up here?"

"Oh, there's always plenty to do, if you'll only do it. I've been cultivating some virtuositities, among other things. Remind me to show you my etchings when we go in. Did you notice, perhaps, that little head over the table, on the north wall? No? Then I smatter botany some. I'll let you look over my *hortus siccus* before you go. It has some very rare ferns ; one of them is a new species,

and Fungus—who exchanges with me—swore that he was going to have it named after me. I sent the first specimen to have it described in his forthcoming report. But doubtless all this sort of thing is a bore to you. Well, lately I have been going into genealogy, and I find it more and more absorbing. Those piles of blank-books and manuscripts on the floor at the south end are all crammed with genealogical notes and material."

"I should think you would find it pretty dry fodder," I said.

"That is because you take an outside, unsympathetic view of it. Now, to an amateur it's anything but dry. There is as much excitement in hunting down a missing link in a pedigree that you have been on the trail of for a long time, as there is in the chase of any other kind of game."

"Do you ever get across the water? Travel, if I remember right, played a large part in your scheme of life once."

"Yes; I've been over once, for a few months. But my income, though very comfortable for the statics of existence, is rather short for the dynamics, and so I mostly stay at home."

"Did you meet any interesting people over there? Any of the crowned heads, famous wits, etc., whom you once proposed to cultivate?"

"No; nobody in particular. I went in a very quiet way. I had some good letters to people in England, but I didn't present them. The idea of introductions became a bore as I got nearer to it."

"And, of course, you didn't elope with the marquise?"

"Was that in my scheme? Well—no, I did not."

"You might have done worse, old man. You ought to have a wife, to keep you from getting rusty up here. And, besides, a fellow that goes so much into genealogy should take some interest in posterity. You ought to cultivate the science practically."

"Oh, I'm past all danger of matrimony now," said Berkeley, with a laugh. "There was a girl that I was rather sweet on a few years ago. I was looking up a pedigree for her papa, and I found that I was related to her myself, in eight different ways, though none of them very near. I explained it to her one evening. It took me an hour to do it, and I fancy she thought it a little slow. At all events, when I afterward hinted that we might make the eight ways nine, she answered that our relationship was so intricate already that she couldn't think of complicating it any further. No, you may put me down as safe."

After this, we sat listening in silence to the distant beat of paddle-wheels where a steamer was moving up river.

"The river is a deal of company," resumed my host. "Thirty-six steamers pass here every twenty-four hours. That now is the *Mary Powell*."

"Well," I said, answering not so much to his last remark as to the whole trend of his autobiog-

raphy, "I suppose you are happy in this way of life, since you seem to prefer it. But it would be terribly monotonous to me."

"Happy?" replied Berkeley, doubtfully. "I don't know. Happiness is a subjective matter. You *are* happy if you think yourself so. As for me, I cultivate an obsolete mood — the old-fashioned humor of melancholy. I don't suppose now that a light-hearted, French kind of chap like you can understand, in the least, what those fine, crusty old Elizabethans meant when they wrote,

‘ There’s naught in this life sweet,
If man were wise to see’t,
But only melancholy.’

This noisy generation has lost their secret. As for me, I am content with the grays and drabs. I think the brighter colors would disturb my mood. I know it's not a large life, but it is a safe one."

I did not at the moment remember that this had been Armstrong's very saying fifteen years ago, but some unconscious association led me to mention him.

"Armstrong and you have changed places in one respect, I should think," said I. "He is keeping a boarding-school somewhere in Connecticut. And instead of leading a Tulkinghorny existence in the New York University building, as he firmly intended, he has married and produced a numerous offspring, I hear."

"Yes, poor fellow!" said Berkeley; "I fancy

that he is dreadfully overrun and hard up. There always was something absurdly domestic about Armstrong. They say he has grown red, fat, and bald. Think of a man with Armstrong's education—and he had some talent, too—keeping a sort of Dotheboys Hall ! I haven't seen him for eight or nine years. The last time was at Jersey City, and I had just time to shake hands with him. He was with a lot of other pedagogues, all going up to a teachers' convention, or some such dreary thing, at Albany."

I had an opportunity for verifying Berkeley's account of Armstrong a few days after my conversation with the former. The Pestalozzian Institute, in the pleasant little village of Thimbleville, was situated, as its prospectus informed the public, on "one of the most elegant residence streets, in one of the healthiest and most beautiful rural towns of Eastern Connecticut." Over the entrance gate was a Roman arch bearing the inscription "Pestalozzian Institute" in large gilt letters. The temple of learning itself was a big, bare, white house at some distance from the street, with an orchard and kitchen garden on one side, and a roomy play-ground on the other. The latter was in possession of some small boys, who were kicking a broken-winded foot-ball about the field with an amount of noise greatly in excess of its occasion. To my question where I could find Mr. Armstrong, they answered eagerly : "Mr. Armstrong ? Yes, sir. You go right into the hall, and knock on the

first door to the right, and he'll come—or some one."

The door to the large square entry stood wide open, and through another door opposite, which was ajar, I saw long tables, and heard the clatter of dishes being removed, while a strong smell of dinner filled the air. I knocked at the door on the right, but no one appeared. Finally, a chubby girl of about ten summers came running round the corner of the house and into the front door. She was eating an apple, and gazed at me wonderingly.

"Is Mr. Armstrong in?" I asked.

"Yes, sir; he's about somewhere. Walk into the parlor, please, and sit down, and I'll find him."

I entered the room on the right, which was a bleak and official-looking apartment,—apparently the reception-room where parents held interviews with the instructor of youth, or tore themselves from the parting embraces of homesick sons at the beginning of a new term. There is always something depressing about the parlor of an "institution" of any kind, and I could not help feeling sorry for Armstrong, as I waited for him, seated on a sofa covered with faded rep. At length the door of an inner room opened, and the principal of the Pestalozzian Institute waddled across the floor with his hand held out, crying:

"Franky Polisson, how are you?"

He certainly had grown stout, and his light hair

had retreated from the forehead. He wore glasses and was dressed in a suit of rusty black, with a high vest which gave him a ministerial look—a much more ministerial look than Berkeley had. His pantaloons presented that appearance which tailors describe as “kneeing out.” He sat down and we chatted for half an hour. The little girl had followed him into the room, and behind her came another three or four years her junior. The older one stood by his side, and he kept his arm around her, while he held the younger on his knee. They were both pretty, healthy-looking children, and kept their eyes fixed on “the man.”

“Are those your own kids?” I inquired presently.

“Yes, two of them. I have six, you know,” he answered, with a fond sigh: “five girls and one boy. The lasses are rather in the majority.”

“I heard you were quite a *paterfamilias*,” I said. “Won’t you come and kiss me, little girl?”

To this proposal the elder answered by burying her head bashfully in her father’s shoulder, while the smaller one simply opened her eyes wider and stared with more fixed intensity.

“Oh, by the way,” exclaimed Armstrong, “of course you’ll take tea with us and spend the evening. I wish I could offer to sleep you here; but the fact is, Mrs. Armstrong’s sister is with us for a few days, and the parents of one of my boys, who is sick, are also staying here; so that my guest chambers are full.”

"Don't mention it," I said. "I couldn't stay over night. I've got to be in New York in the morning, and must take the nine-o'clock train. But I'll stay to supper and much obliged, if you are sure I sha'n't take up too much of your time."

"Not the least—not the least. This is a half holiday, and nothing in particular to do." He hustled to the door and called out loudly, "Mother ! Mother !"

There was no response.

"Nelly," he commanded, "run and find your mamma, and tell her that Mr. Polisson—from New Orleans—an old classmate of papa's, will be here to tea. That's a good girl. Polisson, put on your hat and let's go round the place. I want to show you what an establishment I've got here."

We accordingly made the tour of the premises, Armstrong doing the cicerone impressively, and every now and then urging me with emphatic hospitality to come and spend a week—a fortnight—longer, if I chose, during the summer vacation.

"Bring Mrs. Polisson and the kids. Bring 'em all," he said. "It will do them good ; the air here is fine ; eleven hundred feet above the sea. No malaria—no typhoid. I laid out four hundred dollars last year on sewerage."

It being a half holiday, most of the big boys had gone to a pond in the neighborhood for a swim, under the conduct of the classical master,—a Yale graduate, Armstrong explained, who had stood

fourth in his class, "and a very able fellow,—very able."

But while we sat at tea in Armstrong's family dining-room, which adjoined the school commons, we were made aware of the return of the swimming party by the constant shuffle and tramp of feet through the hall and the noise of feeding in the next room. At our table were present Mrs. Armstrong, her sister (who had a frightened air when addressed and conversed in monosyllables), the parents of the sick pupil, and Armstrong's two eldest children. I surmised that the younger children had been in the habit of sharing in the social meal, and had been crowded out on this occasion by the number of guests ; for I heard them *fremunting in carcere* behind a door through which the waitress passed out and in, bringing plates of waffles. The remonstrances of the waitress were also audible, and, when the wailing rose high, my hostess's face had a distrait expression, as of one prepared at any moment for an irruption of infant Goths.

Mrs. Armstrong was a vivacious little woman, who, I conjectured, had once been a village belle, with some pretensions to *espièglerie* and the fragile prettiness common among New England country girls. But the bearing and rearing of a family of children, and the matronizing of a houseful of hungry school-boys in such a way as to make ends meet, had substituted a faded and worried look for her natural liveliness of expression. She bore up

bravely, however, against the embarrassments of the occasion. In particular, it pleased her to take a facetious view of college life.

"Oh, Mr. Polisson," she cried, "I am afraid that you and my husband were very gay young men when you were at college together. Oh, don't tell me; I know—I know. I've heard of some of your scrapes."

I protested feebly against this impeachment, but Armstrong winked at me with the air of a sly dog, and said :

"It's no use, Polisson. You can't fool Mrs. A. Buckingham and one or two of the fellows have been here to dinner occasionally, and I'm afraid they've given us away."

"Yes," she affirmed, "Mr. Buckingham was one of you too, I guess, though he *is* the Rev. Mr. Buckingham now. Oh, he has told me."

"You remember old Buck?" put in Armstrong. "He is preaching near here—settled over a church at Bobtown."

"Yes," I answered, "I remember there was such a man in the class, but really I didn't know that he was—ah—such a character as you seem to infer, Mrs. Armstrong."

"Oh, he has quieted down now, I assure you," said the lady. "He is as prim and proper as a Methodist meeting-house. Why, he *has* to be, you know."

This amusing fiction of the wildness of Armstrong's youth had evidently become a family

tradition, and even, by a familiar process, an article of belief in his own mind. It reminded me grotesquely of *Justice Shallow's* reminiscences with *Sir John Falstaff*: "Ha, Cousin Silence, that thou hadst seen that, that this knight and I have seen. . . . Jesu, Jesu, the mad days that I have spent!"

The resemblance became still stronger when, as we rose from the table, the good fellow beckoned me into a closet which opened off the dining-room, saying, in a hoarse whisper:

"Here, Polisson, come in here."

He was uncorking a large bottle half-filled with some red liquid, and as he poured a portion of this into two glasses he explained:

"I don't have this sort of thing on the table, you understand, on account of the children and my—ah—position. It would make talk. But I tell you this is some of the real old stuff. How!" And he held his glass up to the light, regarding it with the one eye of a connoisseur, and then drank down its contents with a smack. I was considerably astonished, on doing the same, to discover that this dark beverage—which, from Armstrong's manner, I had been prepared to find something at least as wicked as absinthe—was simply and solely Bordeaux of a mild quality. After this Bacchanalian proceeding we went out into the orchard, which was reserved for family use, and sat on a bench under an apple-tree. Armstrong called his little boy who had been at supper with us and gave him a whispered message, together with some

small change. The messenger disappeared, and after a short absence returned with two very domestic cigars, transparently bought for the nonce from some neighboring grocer. "Have a smoke," commanded my host, and we solemnly kindled the rolls of yellow leaf, Armstrong puffing away at his with the air of a man who, though intrusted by destiny with the responsibility of molding the characters of youth, has not forgotten how to be a man of the world on occasion.

"Well, Charley," I began, after a few preliminary draughts, "you seem to have a good thing of it. Your school is prosperous, I understand; the work suits you; you have a mighty pretty family of children growing up, and your health appears to be perfect."

"Yes," he admitted; "I suppose I ought to be thankful. I certainly enjoy great mercies. It's a warm, crowded kind of life; plenty of affection,—plenty of anxiety too, to be sure. I like to have the boys around me; it keeps one's heart fresh, though in a way it's sometimes wearing to the nerves. Yes, I like the young rascals—I like them. But, of course, it has its drawbacks. Most careers have," he added, in a burst of commonplace.

"It is not exactly the career that you had cut out for yourself," I suggested, "when we talked our plans over, you remember, that last evening at New Haven."

"No, it's not," he acknowledged; "but perhaps it is a better one. What was it I said then?"

I really don't recall it. Something very silly, no doubt."

"Oh, you said, in a general way, that you were going in for money and celibacy and selfishness,—just as you have *not* done."

"Yes, yes ; I know, I remember now," he said, laughing. "Boys are great fools with their brag of what they are going to do and be. Life knocks it out of them fast enough ; they learn to do what they must."

"Do you ever write any poetry nowadays?"

"No, no ; not I. The muse has given me the go-by completely. Except for some occasional verses for a school festival or something of the kind, which I grind out now and then, I've sunk my rhyming dictionary deeper than ever plummet sounded. The chief disadvantage of running a big school like this," he continued, with a sigh, "is the want of leisure and retirement to enable a man to keep up his studies. Sometimes I actually ache for solitude—for a few weeks or months of absolute loneliness and silence. Mrs. Armstrong has fixed me up a nice little private study,—remind me to take you in there before you go,—where I keep my books, etc. But the children will find their way in, and then I'm seldom undisturbed anywhere for more than an hour at a time ; there's always some call on me,—something wanted that no one else can see to."

"You ought to swap places with Berkeley for

awhile. He's got more leisure than he knows what to do with."

"Berkeley! Well, what's he up to now? Philately? Arboriculture? What's his last fad? You've seen him lately, you said. I met him for a minute in New York, a few years ago, and he told me he was going to an old book auction."

"He's got genealogy at present," I explained.

"Genealogy! What hay! What sawdust! Aren't there enough live people to take an interest in, without grubbing up dead ones from tombstones and town clerks' records? Berkeley must be a regular old bachelor antiquary by this time, with all human sympathy dried out of him. No, I wouldn't change with *him*. Would we, fatty?" he said, appealing to a small offspring of uncertain sex which had just toddled out the door and across the gangway to kiss its papa good-night.

I took leave of Armstrong and his interesting family with a sense of increased liking. His worldliness, good nature, and simple little enthusiasms and self-satisfactions had somehow kept him young, and he seemed quite the old Armstrong of college days. I afterward learned that the excellent fellow had just finished his law studies, and was preparing to enter upon practice, when his father's health failed, forcing him to give up his parish, and leaving a number of younger brothers and sisters partly dependent on Armstrong. He had accordingly taken the first situation that promised a fair salary, and, having got started

upon the work of teaching, had been unable to let go until it was too late ; had, indeed, got deeper and deeper in, by falling in love and impulsively marrying at the first opportunity, and finally setting up for himself at the Pestalozzian Institute. Poor fellow ! Good fellow ! *Amico mio, non della fortuna.*

My next call was upon Clay, who had rooms in the Babel building in New York, and was reported to be something of a Bohemian. He received me in a smoking jacket and slippers. He had grown a full beard which hid his finely cut features. His black eyes had the old fire, but his skin was sallow, and I thought that his manner had a touch of listlessness mingled with irritability and defiance. He was glad to see me ; but inclined to be at first, not precisely distant, yet by no means confidential. After awhile, however, he thawed out and became more like the Clay whom I remembered—our college genius, the brilliant, the admired, in those days of eager hero-worship. I told him of my visits to Berkeley and Armstrong.

“ Berkeley I see now and then in town,” said Clay. “ It was rather queer of him to turn parson, but I guess he doesn’t let his theology bother him much. He has a really superior collection of etchings, I am told. Armstrong I haven’t seen for years. I knew he was a pedagogue somewhere in Connecticut.”

“ Don’t you ever go to the class reunions ?” I asked.

"Class reunions? Well, hardly."

"I should think you would; you are so near New Haven."

"How charmingly provincial you are — you Southern chaps! Don't you know that, to a man who lives in New York, nothing is near? Besides, as to my classmates at old Yale and all that, I would go round a corner to avoid meeting most of them."

I expressed myself as duly shocked by this sentiment, and presently I inquired:

"Well, Clay, how are you getting on, anyway?"

"That's a d—— general question. How do you want me to answer it?"

"Oh, not at all, if you don't like."

"Well, don't get miffed. Suppose I answer, 'Pretty well, I thank you, sir.' How will that do?"

"Are you writing anything now?"

"I'm always scribbling something or other. At present, I've got the position of dramatic critic on the 'Daily Boreas,' which is not a very bad bore, and keeps the pot boiling. And I do more or less work of a hack kind for the magazines and cyclopedias, etc.'"

"I thought you were on the 'Weekly Prig.' Berkeley or somebody told me so."

"So I was at one time, but I got out of it. The work was drying me up too fast. The concern is run by a lot of cusses who have failed in various

branches of literature themselves, and undertake, in consequence, to make it unpleasant for every one else who tries to write anything. I got so that I could sling as cynical a quill as the rest of them. But the trick is an easy one and hardly worth learning. It's a great fraud, this business of reviewing. Here's a man of learning, for instance, who has spent years of research on a particular work. He has collected a large library, perhaps, on his subject ; knows more about it than any one else living. Then along comes some insolent little whipper-snapper,—like me,—whose sole knowledge of the matter in hand is drawn from the very book that he pretends to criticise, and patronizes the learned author in a book notice. No, I got out of it ; I hadn't the cheek."

"I bought your book,"* said I, "as soon as it came out."

"That's more than the public did."

"Yes, and I read it, too."

"No ! Did you, now ? That's true friendship. Well, how did you like it ? Did you get your money's worth ?"

I hesitated a moment and then answered :

"It was clever, of course. Anything that you write would be sure to be that. But it didn't appear to get down to hard-pan or to take a firm grip on life—did it ?"

"Ah, that's what the critics said,—only they've

* Dialogues and Romances. By E. Clay. New York: Pater & Sons, 1874.

got a set of phrases for expressing it. They said it was amateurish, that it was in a falsetto key, etc.”

“Well, how does it strike you, yourself? You know that it didn’t come out of the deep places of your nature, don’t you? You feel that you’ve got better behind?”

“Oh, I don’t know. A man does what he can. I rather think it’s the best I can do at present.”

“Why don’t you go at some more serious work; some *magnum opus* that would bring your whole strength into play?”

“A *magnum opus*, my dear fellow!” replied Clay, with a shade of irritation in his voice. “You talk as if a *magnum opus* could be done for the wishing. Why don’t *you* do a *magnum opus*, then?”

“Why don’t *I*? Oh, I’m not a literary fellow—never professed to be. What a question!”

“Well, no more am I, perhaps. I don’t think any better of the stuff that I scribble than you do. It’s all an experiment with me. I’m trying my brushes—trying my brushes. Perhaps I may be able to do something stronger some day, and perhaps not. But at all events I sha’n’t force my mood. I shall wait for my inspiration. One thing I’ve noticed, that as a man grows older he loses his spontaneity and gets more critical with himself. I could do more, no doubt, if I would only let myself go. But I’m like this meerschau here,—a hard piece and slow in coloring.”

“Well, meanwhile you might do something in

the line of scholarship, a history or a volume of critical essays—'Hours with the Poets,' or something of that kind, that would bring in the results of your reading. Have you seen Brainard's book? It seemed to me work that was worth doing. But you could do something of the same kind, only much better, without taking your hands out of your pockets."

Brainard was a painstaking classmate of ours, who had been for some years Professor of Mental and Moral Philosophy, English Literature, and European History, in a Western university, and had recently published a volume entitled "Theism and Pantheism in the Literature of the English Renaissance," which was well spoken of, and was already in its third edition.

"Yes, I've seen the stuff," said Clay. "My unhappy country swarms with that sort of thing: books about books, and books about other books about books—like the big fleas and little fleas. It's not literature; it's a parasitic growth that infests literature. I always say to myself, with the melancholy Jaques, whenever I have to look over a book by Brainard or any such fellow, 'I think of as many matters as he; but I give Heaven thanks and make no boast of them.' No, I don't care to add anything to that particular rubbish heap. You know Emerson said that the worst poem is better than the best criticism of it. The trouble with me is that what I want to do I can't do—at present; what I can do I don't think it worth while to do—

worth my while, at least. Some one else may do it and get the credit and welcome."

"But you do a good deal of work that you don't care about, as it is," I objected.

"Of course. A man must live, and so I do the nearest thing and the one that pays quickest. I got eighty dollars, now, for that last screed in 'The Reservoir.' "

"But," I persisted, "I thought that money-making had no part in your scheme. You could make more money in a dozen other businesses."

"So I could," he answered; "but they all involve some form of slavery. Now, I am my own master. After all, every profession has its drudgery, and literary drudgery is not the worst."

"Well," I conceded, "independent of what you accomplish, I suppose your way of life furnishes as many daily satisfactions as any. I sometimes envy you and Berkeley your freedom from business cares and your opportunities for study. What becomes of most men's college training, for example? By Jove! I picked up a Greek book the other day, and I couldn't read three words running. Now, I take it, you manage to keep up your classics, among other things."

"Oh, my way of life has its compensations," he answered. "But Sydney Smith—wasn't it?—said that life was a middling affair, anyway. As for the classics, etc., I find that reading and study lose much of their stimulus unless they get an issue in action,—unless one can apply them directly toward

his own work. I often think that, if I were fifteen or even ten years younger, I would go into some branch of natural science. A scientific man always seems to me peculiarly happy in the healthy character of his work. He can keep himself apart from it. It is objective, impersonal, makes no demand on his emotions. Now a writing man has to put himself into his work. He has to keep looking out all the time for impressions, material ; to keep trying to enlarge and deepen his own experience, and he gets self-conscious and loses his freshness in the process."

"I am surprised to find you in New York," said I, by way of changing the subject. "I thought you had laid out to live in the country. Do you remember that pretty little word-picture of a winter afternoon that you drew us—something in the style of an *Il Penseroso* landscape? I expected to find you domesticated in a Berkshire farm-house."

"Yes, I remember. I tried it. But I find it necessary, for my work, to be in New York. The newspapers—confound 'em!—won't move into the woods. But, after all, place is indifferent. See here ; this isn't bad."

He drew aside the window curtain, and I looked out over a wilderness of roofs to the North River and the Palisades tinged with a purple light. The ferry-boats and tugs plying over the water in every direction, the noise of the steam whistles, and the clouds of white vapor floating on the clear air, made an inspiring scene.

"I'm up among the architects here," continued Clay; "nothing but the janitor's family between me and the roof."

We talked awhile longer, and on taking leave, I said :

"I shall be on the lookout for something big from you one of these days. You know what we always expected of you. So don't lose your grip, old man."

"Who knows?" he replied. "It doesn't rest with me, but with the *daimon*."

I was unable to visit Doddridge, the remaining member of our group. He lived in the thriving town of Wahee, Minnesota, and I had heard of him, in a general way, as highly prosperous. He was a prominent lawyer and successful politician, and had lately been appointed United States district judge, after representing his section in the State Senate for a term or two. I wrote to him, congratulating him on his success and asking for details. I mentioned also my visits to Berkeley, Armstrong, and Clay. I got a prompt reply from Doddridge, from which I extract such portions as are material to this narrative :

"The first few months after I left college I traveled pretty extensively through the West, making contracts with the farmers as agent for a nursery and seed-farm in my part of the country, but really with the object of spying out the land and choosing a place to settle in. Finally I lit on Wahee, and made up my mind that it was a town with a future. It was bound to be a railroad center. It had a first-rate agricultural country

around it, and a rich timber region a little further back ; and it already had an enterprising little pop. growing rapidly. To-day Wahee is as smart a city of its inches as there is in the Northwest. I squatted right down here, got a little raise from the old man, and put it all into building lots. I made a good thing of it, and paid it all back in six years with eight per cent. interest. Meanwhile, I went into Judge Pratt's law office and made my salt by fitting his boy for college—till I learned enough law to earn a salary. The judge was an old Waheer—belonged to the time-honored aristocracy of the place, having been here at least fifteen years before I came. He got into railroads after awhile (is president now of the Wahee and Heliopolis Bee-line), and left his law practice to me. I married his daughter Alice in 1875. She is a Western girl, but she was educated at Vassar. We have two boys. If you ever come out our way, Polisson, you must put up with us for as long as you can stay. I would like to show you the country about here and have you ride after my team. I've got a pair that can do it inside three minutes. Do you remember Liddell of our class? He is an architect, you know. I got him to come to Wahee, and he has all he can do putting up business blocks. We have got some here equal to anything in Chicago. . . .

"Yes, I am United States judge for this district. There is not much money in it, but it will help me professionally by and by. I shall not keep it long. Do I go into politics much, you ask. I used to, but I've got through for the present. The folks about here wanted to run me for Congress last term, but I hadn't any use for it. As to what you are kind enough to say about my 'success,' etc., whatever success I have had is owing to nothing but a capacity for hard work, which is the only talent that I lay claim to. They want a man out here who will do the work that comes to hand, and keep on doing it till something better turns up. . . .

"So Berkeley has turned out a dilettante instead of an African explorer. I heard he was a minister. He does not seem to have much ambition even in that line of life. I should think

Armstrong had got the right kind of place for him. He was a good fellow, but never had much practical ability. You say very little about Clay. How is old 'Sweetness and Light,' anyway? I saw some fluff of his in one of the magazines,—a 'romance' I think he called it. This is not an age for scribbling romances. The country wants something solider. I never took much stock in philosophers like Berkeley and Clay. There is the same thing the trouble with them both : they don't want to do any hard work, and they conceal their laziness under fine names,—culture, transcendentalism, and what not? 'Feeble and restless youths, born to inglorious days.'"

This letter may be supplemented by another,—say Exhibit B,—which I received from Clay not long after :

"MY DEAR POLISSON : It occurs to me that your question the other day, as to how I was 'getting on,' did not receive as candid an answer as it deserved. I am afraid that you carried away an impression of me as of a man who suspected himself to be a failure, but had not the manliness to acknowledge it. You will say, perhaps, that there are all degrees of half success short of absolute failure. But I say no. In the career which I have chosen, to miss of success—pronounced, unquestionable success—is to fail ; and I am not weak enough to hide from myself on which side of the line I fall. The line is a very distinct one, after all. The fact is, I took the wrong turning, and it is too late to go back. I am a case of arrested development—a common enough case. I might give plenty of excellent excuses to my friends for not having accomplished what they expected me to. But the world doesn't want apologies ; it wants performance.

"You will think this letter a most extraordinary outburst of morbid vanity. But while I can afford to have you think me a failure, I couldn't let you go on thinking me a fraud. That must be my excuse for writing.

"Yours, as ever,

E. CLAY."

This letter moved me deeply by its characteristic mingling of egotism with elevation of feeling. As I held it open in my hand, and thought over my classmates' fortunes, I was led to make a few reflections. - From the fact that Armstrong and Berkeley were leading lives that squarely contradicted their announced ideas and intentions, it was an obvious but not therefore a true inference that circumstance is usually stronger than will. Say, rather, that the species of necessity which consists in character and inborn tendency is stronger than any resolution to run counter to it.

Both Armstrong and Berkeley, on our Commencement night, had spoken from a sense of their own limitations, and in violent momentary rebellion against them. But, in talking with them fifteen years later, I could not discover that the lack of correspondence between their ideal future and their actual present troubled them much. It is matter of common note that it is impossible to make one man realize another's experience ; but it is often quite as hard to make him recover a past stage of his own consciousness.

These, then, had bent to the force of chance or temperament. But Clay had shaped his life according to his programme, and had the result been happier? He who gets his wish often suffers a sharper disappointment than he who loses it. "*So täuscht uns also bald die Hoffnung, bald das Gehoffte,*" says the great pessimist, and Fate is never more ironical than when she humors our

whim. Doddridge alone, who had thrown himself confidingly into the arms of the Destinies, had obtained their capricious favors.

I cannot say that I drew any counsel, civil or moral, from these comparisons. Life is deeper and wider than any particular lesson to be learned from it ; and just when we think that we have at last guessed its best meanings, it laughs in our face with some paradox which turns our solution into a new riddle.



ZERVIAH HOPE.

BY ELIZABETH STUART PHELPS.

PRELUDE.

IN the month of August, in the year 1878, the steamer *Mercy*, of the New York and Savannah line, cast anchor down the channel, off a little town in South Carolina which bore the name of Calhoun. It was not a regular part of her "run" for the *Mercy* to make a landing at this place. She had departed from her course by special permit to leave three passengers, two men and one woman, who had business of a grave nature in Calhoun.

A man, himself a passenger for Savannah, came upon deck as the steamship hove to, to inquire the reason of the delay. He was a short man, thin, with a nervous hand and neck. His eyes were black, his hair was black, and closely cut. He had an inscrutable mouth, and a forehead well-plowed rather by experience than years. He was not an

old man. He was cleanly dressed in new, cheap clothes. He had been commented upon as a reticent passenger. He had no friends on board the *Mercy*. This was the first time upon the voyage that he had been observed to speak. He came forward and stood among the others, and abruptly said :

“ What’s this for ?”

He addressed the mate, who answered with a sidelong look, and none too cordially :

“ We land passengers by the Company’s order.”

“ Those three ?”

“ Yes, the men and the lady.”

“ Who are they ?”

“ Physicians from New York.”

“ Ah-h !” said the man, slowly, making a sighing noise between his teeth. “ That means—that means—”

“ Volunteers to the fever district,” said the mate, shortly, “ as you might have known before now. You’re not of a sociable cast, I see.”

“ I have made no acquaintances,” said the short passenger. “ I know nothing of the news of the ship. Is the lady a nurse ?”

“ She’s a she-doctor. Doctors, the whole of ’em. There ain’t a nurse aboard.”

“ Plenty to be found, I suppose, in this place you speak of ?”

“ How should I know ?” replied the mate, with another sidelong look.

One of the physicians, it seemed, overheard this

last question and reply. It was the woman. She stepped forward without hesitation, and, regarding the short passenger closely, said :

“ There are not nurses. This place is perishing. Savannah and the larger towns have been looked after first—as is natural and right,” added the physician, in a business-like tone. She had a quick and clear-cut, but not ungentle voice.

The man nodded at her curtly, as he would to another man ; he made no answer ; then with a slight flush his eye returned to her dress and figure ; he lifted his hat and stood uncovered till she had passed and turned from him. His face, under the influence of this fluctuation of color, changed exceedingly, and improved in proportion as it changed.

“ Who is that glum fellow, Doctor ?”

One of the men physicians followed and asked the lady ; he spoke to her with an air of *camaraderie*, at once frank and deferential ; they had been class-mates at college for a course of lectures ; he had theories averse to the medical education of women in general, but this woman in particular, having outranked him at graduation, he had made up his mind to her as a marked exception to a wise rule, entitled to a candid fellow’s respect. Besides, despite her diploma, Marian Dare was a lady—he knew the family.

“ Is he glum, Dr. Frank ?” replied Dr. Dare.

But the other young man stood silent. He never consulted with doctresses.

Dr. Dare went below for her luggage. A lonely dory, black of complexion and skittish of gait, had wandered out and hung in the shadow of the steamer, awaiting the passengers. The dory was manned by one negro, who sat with his oars crossed, perfectly silent.

There is a kind of terror for which we find that animals, as well as men, instinctively refrain from seeking expression. The face and figure of the negro boatman presented a dull form of this species of fear. Dr. Dare wondered if all the people in Calhoun would have that look. The negro regarded the *Mercy* and her passengers apathetically.

It was a hot day, and the water seemed to be blistering about the dory. So, too, the stretching sand of the shore, as one raised the eyes painfully against the direct noon-light, was as if it smoked. The low, gray palmetto leaves were curled and faint. Scanty spots of shade beneath sickly trees seemed to gasp upon the hot ground, like creatures that had thrown themselves down to get cool. The outlines of the town beyond had a certain horrible distinctness, as if of a sight that should but could not be veiled. Overhead, and clean to the flat horizon, flashed a sky of blue and blazing fire.

“Passengers for Calhoun !”

The three physicians descended into the dory. The other passengers—what there were of them—gathered to see the little group depart. Dr. Frank offered Dr. Dare a hand, which she accepted, like

a lady, not needing it in the least. She was a climber, with firm, lithe ankles. No one spoke, as these people got in with the negro, and prepared to drift down with the scorching tide. The woman looked from the steamer to the shore, once, and back again, northwards. The men did not look at all. There was an oppression in the scene which no one was ready to run the risk of increasing by the wrong word.

"Land me here, too," said a low voice, suddenly appearing. It was the glum passenger. No one noticed him, except, perhaps, the mate (looking on with the air of a man who would feel an individual grievance in anything this person would be likely to do) and the lady.

"There is room for you," said Dr. Dare. The man let himself into the boat at a light bound, and the negro rowed them away. The *Mercy*, heading outwards, seemed to shrug her shoulders, as if she had thrown them off. The strip of burning water between them and the town narrowed rapidly, and the group set their faces firmly landwards. Once, upon the little voyage, Dr. Frank took up an idle pair of oars, with some vaguely humane intent of helping the negro—he looked so.

"I wouldn't, Frank," said the other gentleman.

"Now, Remane—why, for instance?"

"I wouldn't begin by getting overheated."

No other word was spoken. They landed in silence. In silence, and somewhat weakly, the negro pulled the dory high upon the beach. The

four passengers stood for a moment upon the hot, white sands, moved toward one another, before they separated, by a blind sense of human fellowship. Even Remane found himself touching his hat. Dr. Frank asked Dr. Dare if he could serve her in any way ; but she thanked him, and, holding out her firm, white hand, said, " Good-bye."

This was, perhaps, the first moment when the consciousness of her sex had made itself oppressive to her since she ventured upon this undertaking. She would have minded presenting herself to the Relief Committee of Calhoun, accompanied by gentlemen upon whom she had no claim. She walked on alone, in her gray dress and white straw hat, with her luggage in her own sufficient hand.

The reticent passenger had fallen behind with the negro boatman, with whom he walked slowly, closing the line.

After a few moments, he advanced and hesitatingly joined the lady, beginning to say :

" May I ask you—"

" Ah," interrupted Dr. Dare, cordially, " it is you."

" Will you tell me, madam, the best way of going to work to offer myself as a fever nurse in this place ? I want the *best* way. I want real work."

" Yes, yes," she said, nodding ; " I knew you would do it."

" I came from the North for this purpose, but I meant to go on to Savannah."

"Yes, I know. This is better ; they need *everything* in this place."

She looked toward the gasping little town through the relentless noon. Her merciful blue eyes filled, but the man's look followed with a dry, exultant light.

"There is no porter," he said, abruptly, glancing at her heavy bag and shawl-strap. "Would you permit me to help you?"

"Oh, thank you!" replied Dr. Dare, heartily, relinquishing her burden,

Plainly, this poor fellow was not a gentleman. The lady could afford to be kind to him.

"I know nothing how we shall find it," she chatted, affably, "but I go to work to-night. I presume I shall need nurses before morning. I'll have your address."

She took from her gray sacque pocket a physician's note-book, and stood, pencil in hand.

"My name," he said, "is Hope—Zerviah Hope."

She wrote without comment, walking as she wrote ; he made no other attempt to converse with her. The two physicians followed, exchanging now and then a subdued word. The negro dragged himself wearily over the scorching sand, and thus the little procession of pity entered the town of Calhoun.

My story does not deal with love or ladies. I have to relate no tender passages between the fever-physicians, volunteers from New York, for

the afflicted region of Calhoun. Dr. Marian Dare came South to do a brave work, and I have no doubt she did it bravely, as a woman should. She came in pursuit of science, and I have no doubt she found it, as a woman will. Our chief interest in her at this time lies in the fact that certain missing fragments in the history of the person known as Zerviah Hope we owe to her. She hovers over the tale with a distant and beautiful influence, pervading as womanly compassion and alert as a woman's eye.

I have nothing further to say about the story before I tell it, except that it is true.

That night, after the physicians had gone about their business, Zerviah Hope wandered, a little forlornly, through the wretched town. Scip, the negro boatman, found him a corner to spend the night. It was a passable place, but Hope could not sleep; he had already seen too much. His soul was parched with the thirst of sympathy. He walked his hot attic till the dawn came. As it grew brighter he grew calmer; and, when the unkindly sun burst burning upon the land, he knelt by his window and looked over the doomed town, and watched the dead-carts slinking away toward the everglades in the splendid color of the sky and air, and thought his own thoughts in his own way about this which he had come to do. We should not suppose that they were remarkable thoughts; he had not the look of a remarkable man. Yet, as

he knelt there,—a sleepless, haggard figure blotted against the sunrise, with folded hands and moving lips,—an artist, with a high type of imagination and capable of spiritual discernment, would have found in him a design for a lofty subject, to which perhaps he would have given the name of “Consecration” rather than of “Renunciation,” or of “Exultance” rather than of “Dread.”

A common observer would have simply said : “I should not have taken him for a praying man.”

He was still upon his knees when Dr. Dare’s order came, “Nurse wanted for a bad case !” and he went from his prayer to his first patient. The day was already deep, and a reflection, not of the sunrise, moved with him as light moves.

Doctor Dare, in her gray dress, herself a little pale, met him with keen eyes. She said :

“It is a *very* bad case. An old man—much neglected. No one will go. Are you willing ?”

The nurse answered :

“I am glad.”

She watched him as he walked away—a plain, clean, common man, with unheroic carriage. The physician’s fine eyes fired.

To Doctor Frank, who had happened in, she said :

“He will do the work of ten.”

“His strength was as the strength of ten,
Because his heart was pure,”

quoted the young man, laughing lightly. “I

don't know that I should have thought it, in this case. You've taken a fancy to the fellow."

"I always respect an unmixed motive when I see it," she replied, shortly. "But I've been in practice too long to take sudden fancies. There is no profession like ours, Doctor, for putting the sympathies under double picket guard."

She stiffened a little in her manner. She did not like to be thought an over-enthusiastic woman—womanish, unused to the world.

The weather, soon after the arrival of the *Mercy*, took a terrible mood, and a prolonged drought settled upon Calhoun. The days dawned lurid and long. The nights fell dewless and deadly. Fatal and beautiful colors lurked in the swamps, and in the sifting dust, fine and hard, blown by siroccos across the glare of noon, like sands on the shores of the Lake of Fire. The pestilence walked in darkness, and the destruction wasted at midday. Men died, in that little town of a few thousand souls, at the rate of a score a day—black and white, poor and rich, clean and foul, saint and sinner. The quarantine laws tightened. Vessels fled by the harbor mouth under full sail, and melted like helpless compassion upon the fiery horizon. Trains upon the Shore Line shot through and thundered past the station; they crowded on steam; the fireman and his stoker averted their faces as they whirled by. The world turned her back upon Calhoun, and the dying town was shut in with her dead. Only, at long intervals, the

Mercy, casting anchor far down the channel, sent up by Scip, the weak, black boatman, the signs of human fellowship—food, physician, purse, medicine—that spoke from the heart of the North to the heart of the South, and upheld her in those well-remembered days.

Zerviah Hope, volunteer nurse, became quickly enough a marked man in Calhoun. He more than verified Doctor Dare's prognosis. Where the deadliest work was to be done, this man, it was observed, asked to be sent. Where no one else would go, he went. What no one else would do, he did. He sought the neglected, and the negroes. He braved the unclean, and the unburied. With the readiness of all incisive character acting on emergencies, he stamped himself upon the place and time. He went to his task as the soldier goes to the front under raking fire, with gleaming eyes and iron muscles. The fever of the fight was on him. He seemed to wrestle with disease for his patients, and to trample death beneath his feet. He glowed over his cures with a positive physical dilation, and writhed over his dead as if he had killed them. He seemed built of endurance more than mortal. It was not known when he slept, scarcely if he ate. His weariness sat upon him like a halo. He grew thin, refined, radiant. In short, he presented an example of that rare spectacle which never fails to command spectators—a common man possessed by an uncommon enthusiasm.

What passed with him at this time in that undiscovered sea which we call a man's inner life, it would not be easy to assert. So far as we can judge, all the currents of his nature had swelled into the great, pulsing tide of self-surrender, which swept him along. Weakness, wrong, memory, regret, fear, grief, pleasure, hope,—all the little channels of personal life,—ran dry. He was that most blessed of human creatures, a man without a past and without a future, and living in a present nobler than the one could have been or the other could become. He continued to be a silent man, speaking little, excepting to his patients, and now and then, very gently, to the lady, Dr. Dare. He was always pliable to the influence of a woman's voice or to womanly manner. He had, in the presence of women, the quick responsiveness and sudden change of color and sensitiveness of intonation which bespeak the man whose highest graces and lowest faults are likely to be owing to feminine power.

This was a quality which gave him remarkable success as a nurse. He was found to be infinitely tender, and of fine, brave patience. It was found that he shrank from no task because it was too small, as he had shrunk from no danger because it was too great. He became a favorite with the sick and with physicians. The convalescent clung to him, the dying heard of him and sent for him, the Relief Committee leaned upon him, as in such crises the leader leans upon the led. By degrees,

he became greatly trusted in Calhoun ; this is to say, that he became greatly loved.

I have been told that, to this day, many people personally unknown to him, whose fate it was to be imprisoned in that beleaguered town at that time, and who were familiar with the nervous figure and plain, intense countenance of the Northern nurse, as he passed, terrible day after terrible day, to his post, cannot hear of him, even now, without that suffusion of look by which we hold back tears ; and that, when his name took on, as it did, a more than local reputation, they were unable to speak it because of choking voices. I have often wished that he knew this.

It was the custom in Calhoun to pay the nurses at short, stated intervals,—I think once a week, on Saturday nights. The first time that Hope was summoned to receive his wages, he evinced marked emotion, too genuine not to be one of surprise and repugnance.

“I had not thought,—” he began, and stood, coloring violently.

“You earn your five dollars a day, if anybody in Calhoun does,” urged the official, with kindly brusqueness.

“It is not right ; I do not wish to take the money,” said the nurse, with agitation. “I do not wish to be paid for—saving—human life. I did not come to the fever district to make money ; I came to save life—to *save life!*” he added, in a quick whisper. He had not slept for four nights,

and seemed, they noticed, more than usually nervous in his manner.

“The money is yours,” insisted the treasurer.

“Very well,” said Hope, after a long silence ; and no more was said about it. He took his wages and walked away up the street, absorbed in thought.

One morning, he went to his lodgings to seek a little rest. It was about six o'clock, and people were already moving in the hot, thirsty streets. The apothecaries' doors were open, and their clerks were astir. The physicians drove or walked hastily, with the haggard look of men whose days and nights are too short for their work, and whose hope, and heart as well, have grown almost too small. Zerviah noticed those young Northern fellows among them, Frank and Remane, and saw how they had aged since they came South,—brave boys, both of them, and had done a man's brave deed. Through her office window, as he walked past, he caught a glimpse of Dr. Dare's gray dress and blonde, womanly head of abundant hair. She was mixing medicines, and patients stood waiting. She looked up and nodded as he went by ; she was too busy to smile. At the door of the Relief Committee, gaunt groups hung, clamoring. At the telegraph office, knots of men and women gathered, duly inspiring the heroic young operator,—a slight girl,—who had not left her post for now many days and nights. Her chief had the fever last week,—was taken at the wires,

—lived to get home. She was the only person alive in the town who knew how to communicate with the outer world. She had begun to teach a little brother of hers the Morse alphabet,—“That somebody may know, Bobby, if I—can’t come some day.” She, too, knew Zerviah Hope, and looked up; but her pretty face was clouded with the awful shadow of her own responsibility.

“We all have about as much as we can bear,” thought Zerviah, as he went by. His own burden was lightened a little that morning, and he was going home to get a real rest. He had just saved his last patient—the doctor gave him up. It was a young man, the father of five very little children, and their mother had died the week before. The nurse had looked at the orphans, and said: “*He’s got to live.*” This man had blessed him this morning, and called the love of heaven on his head and its tender mercy on his whole long life. Zerviah walked with quick step. He lifted his head, with its short, black, coarse hair. His eyes, staring for sleep, flashed, fed with a food the body knows not of. He felt almost happy, as he turned to climb the stairs that led to the attic shelter where he had knelt and watched the dawn come on that first day, and given himself to God and to the dying of Calhoun. He had always kept that attic, partly because he had made that prayer there. He thought it helped him to make others since. He had not always been a man who prayed. The habit was new, and required culture. He had

guarded it rigidly since he came South, as he had his diet and regimen of bathing, air, and other physical needs.

On this morning that I speak of, standing with his almost happy face and lifted head, with his foot upon the stairs, he turned, for no reason that he could have given, and looked over his shoulder. A man behind him, stepping softly, stopped, changed color, and crossed the street.

"I am followed," said the nurse.

He spoke aloud, but there was no one to hear him. A visible change came over his face. He stood uncertain for a moment; then shut the door and crawled upstairs. At intervals he stopped on the stairs to rest, and sat with his head in his hands, thinking. By and by he reached his room, and threw himself heavily upon his bed. All the radiance had departed from his tired face, as if a fog had crept over it. He hid it in his long, thin, humane hands, and lay there for a little while. He was perplexed—not surprised. He was not shocked—only disappointed. Dully he wished that he could get five minutes' nap; but he could not sleep. Not knowing what else to do, he got upon his knees presently, in that place by the window he liked to pray in, and said aloud:

"Lord, I didn't expect it; I wasn't ready. I should like to sleep long enough to decide what to do."

After this, he went back to bed and lay still again, and in a little while he truly slept. Not

long ; but to those who perish for rest, a moment of unconsciousness may do the work of a cup of water to one perishing of thirst. He started, strengthened, with lines of decision forming about his mouth and chin ; and, having bathed and cleanly dressed, went out.

He went out beyond the town to the hut where Scip the boatman lived. Scip was at home. He lived quite alone. His father, his mother and four brothers had died of the plague since June. He started when he saw Hope, and his habitual look of fear deepened to a craven terror ; he would rather have had the yellow fever than to have seen the Northern nurse just then. But Zerviah sat down by him on the hot sand, beside a rather ghastly palmetto that grew there, and spoke to him very gently. He said :

“ The *Mercy* came in last night, Scip.—I know. And you rowed down for the supplies. You heard something about me on board the *Mercy*. Tell me, Scip.”

“ He’s a durn fool,” said Scip, with a dull show of passion.

“ Who is a durn fool ? ”

“ That dem mate.”

“ So it was the mate ? Yes. What did he say, Scip ? ”

“ I never done believe it,” urged Scip, with an air of suddenly recollected virtue.

“ But you told of it, Scip.”

"I never told nobody but Jupiter, the durn fool!" persisted Scip.

"Who is Jupiter?"

"Doctor Remane's Jupiter, him that holds his hoss, that he brung up from the fever. He said he wouldn't tell. I never done believe it, *never!*"

"It seems to me, Scip," said Zerviah, in a low, kind voice, "that I wouldn't have told if I'd been you. But never mind."

"I never done mean to hurt you!" cried Scip, following him into the road. "Jupiter the durn, he said he'd never tell. I never told nobody else."

"You have told the whole town," said Zerviah Hope, patiently. "I'm sorry, but never mind."

He stood for a moment looking across the stark palmetto, over the dusty stretch of road, across the glare, to the town. His eyes blinded and filled.

"It wouldn't have been a great while," he said. "I wish you hadn't, Scip, but never mind!"

He shook the negro gently off, as if he had been a child. There was nothing more to say. He would go back to his work. As he walked along, he suddenly said to himself:

"She did not smile this morning! Nor the lady at the telegraph office, either. Nor—a good many other folks. I remember now. . . . Lord!" he added aloud, thought breaking into one of his half-unconscious prayers, which had the more pathos because it began with the rude abruptness

of an apparent oath,—“ Lord ! what in the name of heaven am I going to do about it ? ”

Now, as he was coming into the little city, with bowed head and broken face, he met Doctor Dare. She was riding on her rounds upon a patient, Southern tackey, and she was riding fast. But she reined up and confronted him.

“ Mr. Hope ! There is a hateful rumor brought from New York about you. I am going to tell you immediately. It is said—”

“ Wait a minute ! ” he pleaded, holding out both hands. “ Now. Go on. ”

“ It is said that you are an escaped convict, ” continued the lady, distinctly.

“ It is false ! ” cried the nurse, in a ringing voice.

The doctor regarded him for a moment.

“ I may be wrong. Perhaps it was not so bad. I was in a cruel hurry, and so was Doctor Frank. Perhaps they said a discharged convict. ”

“ What else ? ” asked Zerviah, lifting his eyes to hers.

“ They said you were just out of a seven years’ imprisonment for manslaughter. They said you killed a man—for jealousy, I believe ; something about a woman. ”

“ What else ? ” repeated the nurse, steadily.

“ I told them I *did not believe one word of it !* ” cried Marian Dare.

“ Thank you, madam, ” said Zerviah Hope, after a scarcely perceptible pause ; “ but it is true. ”

He drew one fierce breath.

"She was beautiful," he said. "I loved her; he ruined her; I stabbed him!"

He had grown painfully pale. He wanted to go on speaking to this woman, not to defend or excuse himself, not to say anything weak or wrong, only to make her understand that he did not want to excuse himself; in some way, just because she *was* a woman, to make her feel that he was man enough to bear the burden of his deed. He wanted to cry out to her, "You are a woman! Oh, be gentle, and understand how sorry a man can be for a deadly sin!" but his lips were parched. He moved them dryly; he could not talk.

She was silent at first. She was a prudent woman; she thought before she spoke.

"Poor fellow!" she said, suddenly. Her clear blue eyes overflowed. She held out her hand, lifted his, wrung it, dropped it, and softly added, "Well, never mind!" much as if he had been a child or a patient,—much as he himself had said, "Never mind!" to Scip.

Then Zerviah Hope broke down.

"I haven't got a murderer's heart!" he cried. "It has been taken away from me. I ain't so bad—*now*. I meant to be—I wanted to do—"

"Hush!" she said. "You have, and you shall. God is fair."

"Yes," said the penitent convict, in a dull voice, "God is fair, and so he let 'em tell of me. I've got no fault to find with *Him*. So nigh as I can

understand Almighty God, He means well. . . . I guess He'll pull me through some way. . . . But I wish Scip hadn't told just now. I can't *help* being sorry. It wasn't that I wanted to cheat, but"—he choked—" *the sick folks used to like me.* Now, do you think I'd ought to go on nursing, Doctor? Do you think I'd ought to stop?"

"You are already an hour late," replied the woman of science, in her usual business-like voice. "Your substitute will be sleepy and restless; that affects the patient. Go back to your work as fast as you can. Ask me no more foolish questions."

She drew her veil; there was unprofessional moisture on her long, feminine lashes. She held out her hearty hand-grasp to him, touched the tackey, and galloped away.

"She is a good woman," said Zerviah, half aloud, looking down at his cold fingers. "She touched me, and she knew! Lord, I should like to have you bless her!"

He looked after her. She sat her horse finely; her gray veil drifted in the hot wind. His sensitive color came. He watched her as if he had known that he should never see her again on earth.

A ruined character may be as callous as a paralyzed limb. A ruined and repentant one is in itself an independent system of sensitive and tortured nerves.

Zerviah Hope returned to his work, shrinking under the foreknowledge of his fate. He felt as if he knew what kind of people would remind him

that they had become acquainted with his history, and what ways they would select to do it.

He was not taken by surprise when men who had lifted their hats to the popular nurse last week, passed him on the street to-day with a cold nod or curious stare. When women who had revered the self-sacrifice and gentleness of his life as only women do or can reverence the quality of tenderness in a man, shrank from him as if he were something infectious, like the plague,—he knew it was just, though he felt it hard.

His patients heard of what had happened, sometimes, and indicated a feeling of recoil. That was the worst. One said :

“I am sorry to hear you are not the man we thought you,” and died in his arms that night.

Zerviah remembered that these things must be. He reasoned with himself. He went into his attic, and prayed it all over. He said :

“Lord, I can’t expect to be treated as if I’d never been in prison. I’m sorry I mind it so. Perhaps I’d ought not to. I’ll try not to care too much.”

More than once he was sure of being followed again, suspiciously or curiously. It occurred to him at last that this was most likely to happen on pay-days. That puzzled him. But when he turned, it was usually some idler, and the fellow shrank and took to his heels, as if the nurse had the fever.

In point of fact, even in that death-stricken

town, to be alive was to be as able to gossip as well people, and rumor, wearied of the monotonous fever symptom, found a diverting zest in this shattered reputation.

Zerviah Hope was very much talked about in Calhoun ; so much, that the Relief Committee heard, questioned, and experienced official anxiety. It seemed a mistake to lose so valuable a man. It seemed a severity to disturb so noble a career. Yet who knew what sinister countenance the murderer might be capable of shielding beneath his mask of pity? The official mind was perplexed. Was it humane to trust the lives of our perishing citizens to the ministrations of a felon who had so skillfully deceived the most intelligent guardians of the public weal? There was, in particular, a chairman of a sub-committee (on the water supply) who was burdened with uneasiness.

"It's clear enough what brought *him* to Calhoun," said this man. "What do you suppose the fellow does with his five dollars a day?"

The Committee on the Water Supply promptly divided into a Sub-Vigilance, and to the Sub-Vigilance Committee Zerviah Hope's case was referred. The result was, that he was followed on pay-day.

One Saturday night, just as the red-hot sun was going down, the sub-committee returned to the Relief Office in a state of high official excitement, and reported to the chief as follows :

"We've done it. We've got him. We've found

out what the fellow does with his money. He puts it—”

“Well?” for the sub-committee hesitated.

“Into the relief contribution-boxes on the corners of the street.”

“*What!*”

“Every dollar. We stood and watched him count it out—his week’s wages. Every mortal cent that Yankee’s turned over to the fund for the sufferers. He never kept back a red. He poured it all in.”

“Follow him next week. Report again.”

They followed, and reported still again. They consulted, and accepted the astounding truth. The murderer, the convict, the miserable, the mystery, Zerviah Hope,—volunteer nurse, poor, friendless, discharged from Sing Sing, was proved to have surrendered to the public charities of Calhoun, every dollar which he had earned in the service of her sick and dying.

The Committee on the Water Supply, and the Sub-Vigilance Committee stood, much depressed, before their superior officer. He, being a just man, flushed red with a noble rage.

“Where is he? Where is Zerviah Hope? The man should be sent for. He should receive the thanks of the committee. He should receive the acknowledgments of the city. And we’ve set on him like detectives! hunted him down! Zounds! The city is disgraced. Find him for me!”

“We have already done our best,” replied the

sub-committee, sadly. "We have searched for the man. He cannot be found."

"Where is the woman-doctor?" persisted the excited chief. "She recommended the fellow. She'd be apt to know. Can't some of you find her?"

At this moment, young Dr. Frank looked haggardly into the Relief Office.

"I am taking her cases," he said. "She is down with the fever."

It was the morning after his last pay-day—Sunday morning, the first in October; a dry, deadly, glittering day. Zerviah had been to his attic to rest and bathe; he had been there some hours since sunrise, in the old place by the window, and watched the red sun kindle, and watched the dead-carts slink away into the color, and kneeled and prayed for frost. Now, being strengthened in mind and spirit, he was descending to his Sabbath's work, when a message met him at the door. The messenger was a negro boy, who thrust a slip of paper into his hand, and, seeming to be seized with superstitious fright, ran rapidly up the street and disappeared.

The message was a triumphal result of the education of the freedmen's evening school, and succinctly said :

"ive Gut IT. Nobuddy Wunt Nuss me. Norr no Docter nEther.

"P. S. Joopiter the Durn hee sed he'd kerry This i dont Serpose youd kum. SCIP."

The sun went down that night as red as it had risen. There were no clouds. There was no wind. There was no frost. The hot dust curdled in the shadow that coiled beneath the stark palmetto. That palmetto always looked like a corpse, though there was life in it yet. Zerviah came to the door of Scip's hovel for air, and looked at the thing. It seemed like something that ought to be buried. There were no other trees. The everglades were miles away. The sand and the scant, starved grass stretched all around. Scip's hut stood quite by itself. No one passed by. Often no one passed for a week, or even more. Zerviah looked from the door of the hut to the little city. The red light lay between him and it, like a great pool. He felt less lonely to see the town, and the smoke now and then from chimneys. He thought how many people loved and cared for one another in the suffering place. He thought how much love and care suffering gave birth to, in human hearts. He began to think a little of his own suffering; then Scip called him, sobbing wretchedly. Scip was very sick. Hope had sent for Dr. Dare. She had not come. Scip was too sick to be left. The nurse found his duty with the negro. Scip was growing worse.

By and by, when the patient could be left for a moment again, Zerviah came to the air once more. He drew in great breaths of the now cooler night. The red pool was gone. All the world was filled with the fatal beauty of the purple colors that he

had learned to know so well. The swamps seemed to be asleep, and to exhale in the slow, regular pulsations of sleep. In the town, lamps were lighted. From a hundred windows, fair, fine sparks shone like stars as the nurse looked over. There, a hundred watchers tended their sick or dead, or their healing, dearly loved, and guarded ones. Dying eyes looked their last at eyes that would have died to save them; strengthening hands clasped hands that had girded them with the iron of love's tenderness, through the valley of the shadow, and up the heights of life and light. Over there, in some happy home, tremulous lips that the plague had parted met to-night in their first kiss of thanksgiving.

Zerviah thought of these things. He had never felt so lonely before. It seemed a hard place for a man to die in. Poor Scip!

Zerviah clasped his thin hands and looked up at the purple sky.

"Lord," he said, "it is my duty. I came South to do my duty. Because he told of me, had I ought to turn against him? It is a lonesome place; he's got it hard, but I'll stand by him. . . . Lord!"—his worn face became suddenly suffused, and flashed, transfigured, as he lifted it—"Lord God Almighty! You stood by me! *I* couldn't have been a pleasant fellow to look after. You stood by *me* in my scrape! I hadn't treated *You* any too well. . . . You needn't be afraid I'll leave the creetur."

He went back into the hut. Scip called, and he hurried in. The nurse and the plague, like two living combatants, met in the miserable place and battled for the negro.

The white Southern stars blazed out. How clean they looked ! Zerviah could see them through the window, where the wooden shutter had flapped back. They looked well and wholesome—holy, he thought. He remembered to have heard some one say, at a Sunday meeting he happened into once, years ago, that the word holiness meant health. He wondered what it would be like, to be holy. He wondered what kinds of people would be holy people, say, after a man was dead. Women, he thought,—good women, and honest men who had never done a deadly deed.

He occupied his thoughts in this way. He looked often from the cold stars to the warm lights throbbing in the town. They were both company to him. He began to feel less alone. There was a special service called somewhere in the city that night, to read the prayers for the sick and dying. The wind rose feebly, and bore the sound of the church-bells to the hut. There was a great deal of company, too, in the bells. He remembered that it was Sunday night.

It was Monday, but no one came. It was Tuesday, but the nurse and the plague still battled alone together over the negro. Zerviah's stock of remedies was as ample as his skill. He had

thought he should save Scip. He worked without sleep, and the food was not clean. He lavished himself like a lover over this black boatman ; he leaned like a mother over this man who had betrayed him.

But on Tuesday night, a little before midnight, Scip rose, struggling on his wretched bed, and held up his hands and cried out :

“ Mr. Hope ! Mr. Hope ! I never done mean to harm ye ! ”

“ You have not harmed me,” said Zerviah, solemnly. “ Nobody ever harmed me but myself. Don’t mind me, Scip.”

Scip put up his feeble hand ; Zerviah took it ; Scip spoke no more. The nurse held the negro’s hand a long time ; the lamp went out ; they sat on in the dark. Through the flapping wooden shutter the stars looked in.

Suddenly, Zerviah perceived that Scip’s hand was quite cold.

He carried him out by starlight, and buried him under the palmetto. It was hard work digging alone. He could not make a very deep grave, and he had no coffin. When the earth was stamped down, he felt extremely weary and weak. He fell down beside his shovel and pick to rest, and lay there in the night till he felt stronger. It was damp and dark. Shadows like clouds hung over the distant outline of the swamp.

The Sunday bells in the town had ceased.

There were no sounds but the cries of a few lonely birds and wild creatures of the night, whose names he did not know. This little fact added to his sense of solitude.

He thought at first he would get up and walk back to the city in the dark. An intense and passionate longing seized him to be among living men. He took a few steps down the road. The unwholesome dust blew up through the dark against his face. He found himself so tired that he concluded to go back to the hut. He would sleep, and start in the morning with the break of the dawn. He should be glad to see the faces of his kind again, even though the stir of welcome and the light of trust were gone out of them for him. They lived, they breathed, they spoke. He was tired of death and solitude.

He groped back into the hut. The oil was low, and he could not relight the lamp. He threw himself in the dark upon his bed.

He slept until late in the morning, heavily. When he waked, the birds were shrill in the hot air, and the sun glared in.

"I will go now," he said, aloud. "I am glad I can go," and crept to his feet.

He took two steps—staggered—and fell back. He lay for some moments, stricken more with astonishment than alarm. His first words were :

"Lord God ! After all—after all I've gone through—Lord God Almighty, if You'll believe it—I've *got it !*"

This was on Wednesday morning. Night fell, but no one came. Thursday—but outside the hut no step stirred the parched, white dust. Friday—Saturday—no voice but his own moaning broke upon the sick man's straining ear.

His professional experience gave him an excruciating foresight of his symptoms, and their result presented itself to him with horrible distinctness. As one by one he passed through the familiar conditions whose phases he had watched in other men a hundred times, he would have given his life for a temporary ignorance. His trained imagination had little mercy on him. He weighed his chances, and watched his fate with the sad exactness of knowledge.

As the days passed, and no one came to him, he was aware of not being able to reason with himself clearly about his solitude. Growing weak, he remembered the averted faces of the people for whom he had labored, and whom he had loved. In the stress of his pain their estranged eyes gazed at him. He felt that he was deserted because he was distrusted. Patient as he was, this seemed hard.

"They did not care enough for me to miss me," he said, aloud, gently. "I suppose I was not worth it. I had been in prison. I was a wicked man. I must not blame them."

And again :

"They would have come if they had known. They would not have let me *die* alone. I don't

think *she* would have done that. I wonder where she is? Nobody has missed me—that is all. I must not mind.”

Growing weaker, he thought less and prayed more. He prayed, at last, almost all his time. When he did not pray, he slept. When he could not sleep, he prayed. He addressed God with that sublime familiarity of his, which fell from his lips with no more irreverence than the kiss of a child falling upon its mother’s hand or neck.

The murderer, the felon, the outcast, talked with the Almighty Holiness, as a man talketh with his friends. The deserted, distrusted, dying creature believed himself to be trusted by the Being who had bestowed on him the awful gift of life.

“Lord,” he said, softly, “I guess I can bear it. I’d like to see somebody—but I’ll make out to get along. . . . Lord! I’m pretty weak. I know all about these spasms. You get delirious next thing, you know. Then you either get better or you never do. It’ll be decided by Sunday night. Lord! Dear Lord!” he added, with a tender pause, “don’t *You* forget me! I hope *You’ll* miss me enough to hunt me up.”

It grew dark early on Saturday night. The sun sank under a thin, deceptive web of cloud. The shadow beneath the palmetto grew long over Scip’s fresh grave. The stars were dim and few. The wind rose, and the lights in the city, where watchers wept over their sick, trembled on the frail

breeze, and seemed to be multiplied, like objects seen through tears.

Through the wooden shutter, Zerviah could see the lights, and the lonely palmetto, and the grave. He could see those few cold stars.

He thought, while his thoughts remained his own, most tenderly and longingly of those for whom he had given his life. He remembered how many keen cares of their own they had to carry, how many ghastly deeds and sights to do and bear. It was not strange that he should not be missed. Who was he?—a disgraced, unfamiliar man, among their kin and neighborhood. Why should they think of him? he said.

Yet he was glad that he could remember them. He wished his living or his dying could help them any. Things that his patients had said to him, looks that healing eyes had turned on him, little signs of human love and leaning, came back to him as he lay there, and stood around his bed, like people, in the dark hut.

"*They loved me,*" he said: "Lord, as true as I'm alive, they did! I'm glad I lived long enough to save life, *to save life!* I'm much obliged to You for that! I wish there was something else I could do for them. . . . Lord! I'd be willing to die if it would help them any. If I thought I could do anything that way, toward sending them a frost—

"No," he added, "that ain't reasonable. A frost and a human life ain't convertible coin. He don't do unreasonable things. May be I've lost

my head already. But I'd be glad to. That's all. I suppose I can *ask* You for a frost. *That's* reason.

“Lord God of earth and heaven ! that made the South and North, the pestilence and destruction, the sick and well, the living and the dead, have mercy on us miserable sinners ! Have mercy on the folks that pray to You, and on the folks that don't ! Remember the old graves, and the new ones, and the graves that are to be opened if this hellish heat goes on, and send us a blessed frost, O Lord, *as an act of humanity* ! And if that ain't the way to speak to You, remember I haven't been a praying man long enough to learn the language very well,—and that I'm pretty sick,—but that I would be glad to die—to give them—a great, white, holy frost. Lord, a frost ! Lord, a cool, white, clean frost, for these poor devils that have borne so much !”

At midnight of that Saturday he dozed and dreamed. He dreamed of what he had thought while Scip was sick : of what it was like, to be holy ; and, sadly waking, thought of holy people—good women and honest men, who had never done a deadly deed.

“I cannot be holy,” thought Zerviah Hope ; “but I can pray for frost.” So he tried to pray for frost. But by that time he had grown confused, and his will wandered pitifully, and he saw strange sights in the little hut. It was as if he were not alone. Yet no one had come in. *She* could not come at midnight. Strange—how

strange ! Who was that who walked about the hut ? Who stood and looked at him ? Who leaned to him ? Who brooded over him ? Who put arms beneath him ? Who looked at him, as those look who love the sick too much to shrink from them ?

“ I don't know You,” said Zerviah, in a distinct voice. Presently he smiled. “ Yes, I guess I do. I see now. I'm not used to You. I never saw You before. You are Him I've heered about— God's Son ! God's Son, You've taken a great deal of trouble to come here after me. Nobody else came. You're the only one that has remembered me. You're very good to me.

“ . . . Yes, I remember. They made a prisoner of *You*. Why, yes ! They deserted *You*. They let *You* die by Yourself. What did You do it for ? I don't know much about theology. I am not an educated man. I never prayed till I come South. . . . I forget — *What did You do it for ?* ”

A profound and solemn silence replied.

“ Well,” said the sick man, breaking it in a satisfied tone, as if he had been answered, “ I wasn't worth it . . . but I'm glad You came. I wish they had a frost, poor things ! *You* won't go away ? Well, I'm glad. Poor things ! Poor things ! I'll take Your hand, if You've no objections.”

After a little time, he added, in a tone of unutterable tenderness and content :

“ *Dear Lord !* ” and said no more.

It was a quiet night. The stars rode on as if there were no task but the tasks of stars in all the

universe, and no sorrow keener than their sorrow, and no care other than their motion and their shining. The web of cloud floated like exhaling breath between them and the earth. It grew cooler before the dawn. The leaves of the palmetto over Scip's grave seemed to uncurl, and grow lax, and soften. The dust still flew heavily, but the wind rose.

The Sunday-bells rang peacefully. The sick heard them, and the convalescent and the well. The dying listened to them before they left. On the faces of the dead, too, there came the look of those who hear.

The bells tolled, too, that Sunday. They tolled almost all the afternoon. The young Northerner, Dr. Remane, was gone,—a reticent, brave young man,—and the heroic telegraph operator. Saturday night they buried her. Sunday, "Bobby" took her place at the wires, and spelled out, with shaking fingers, the cries of Calhoun to the wide, well world.

By sunset, all the bells had done ringing and done tolling. There was a clear sky, with cool colors. It seemed almost cold about Scip's hut. The palmetto lifted its faint head. The dust slept. It was not yet dark when a little party from the city rode up, searching for the dreary place. They had ridden fast. Dr. Frank was with them, and the lady, Marian Dare. She rode at their head. She hurried nervously on. She was pale, and still weak. The chairman of the Relief Committee was with her, and the sub-committee and others.

Dr. Dare pushed on through the swinging door

of the hut. She entered alone. They saw the backward motion of her gray-sleeved wrist, and came no farther, but removed their hats and stood. She knelt beside the bed, and put her hand upon his eyes. God is good, after all. Let us hope that they knew her before they closed.

She came out, and tried to tell about it, but broke down, and sobbed before them all.

"It's a martyr's death," said the chief, and added solemnly, "Let us pray."

He knelt, and the others with him, between the buried negro and the unburied nurse, and thanked God for the knowledge and the recollection of the holy life which this man had lived among them in their hour of need.

They buried him, as they must, and hurried homeward to their living, comforting one another for his memory as they could.

As for him, he rested, after her hand had fallen on his eyes. He who had known so deeply the starvation of sleeplessness, slept well that night.

In the morning, when they all awoke, these of the sorrowing city here, and those of the happy city yonder ; when they took up life again with its returning sunrise,—the sick and the well, the free and the fettered, the living and the dead,—the frost lay, cool, white, blessed, on his grave.

THE LIFE-MAGNET.

BY ALVEY A. ADEE.

THERE was something about the wholesome sleepiness of Freiberg, in Saxony, that fitted well with the lazy nature of Ronald Wyde. So, having run down there to spend a day or two among the students and the mines, and taking a liking to the quaint, unmodernized town, he bodily changed his plans of autumn-travel, gave up a cherished scheme of Russian vagabondage, had his baggage sent from Dresden, and made ready to settle down and drowse away three or four months in idleness and not over-arduous study. And this move of his led to the happening of a very strange and seemingly unreal event in his life.

Ronald Wyde was then about twenty-five or six years old, rather above the medium height, with thick blue-black hair that he had an artist-trick of allowing to ripple down to his neck, dark hazel

eyes that were almost too deeply recessed in their bony orbits, and a troublesome growth of beard that, close-shaven as he always was, showed in strong blue outline through the thin and rather sallow skin. His address was singularly pleasing, and his wide experience of life, taught him by years of varied travel, made him a good deal of a cosmopolitan in his views and ways, which caused him to be looked upon as a not over-safe companion for young men of his own age or under.

Having made up his mind to winter in Freiberg, his first step was to quit the little hotel, with its mouldy stone-vaulted entrance and its columned dining-room, under whose full-centered arches close beery and smoky fumes lingered persistently, and seek quieter student-lodgings in the heart of the town. His choice was mainly influenced by a thin-railed balcony, twined through and through by the shoots of a vigorous Virginia creeper, that flamed and flickered in the breezy October sunsets in strong relief against the curtains that drifted whitely out and in through the open window. So, with the steady-going and hale old Frau Spritzkrapfen he took up his quarters, fully persuading himself that he did so for the sake of the stray home-breaths that seemed to stir the scarlet vine-leaves more gently for him, and ignoring pretty Lottchen's great, earnest Saxon eyes as best he could.

A sunny morning followed his removal to Frau Spritzkrapfen's tidy home. There had been a

slight rain in the early night, and the footways were yet bright and moist in patches that the slanting morning rays were slowly coaxing away. Ronald Wyde, having set his favorite books handily on the dimity-draped table, which comprised for him the process of getting to rights, and having given more than one glance of amused wonderment at the naïve blue-and-white scriptural tiles that cased his cumbrous four-story earthenware stove, and smiled lazily at poor Adam's obvious and sudden indigestion, even while the uneaten half-apple remained in his guilty hand, he stepped out on his balcony, leaned his elbows among the crimson leaves, and took in the healthful morning air in great draughts. It was a Sunday; the bells of the gray minster hard by were iterating their clanging calls to the simple town-folk to come and be droned to in sleepy German gutturals from the carved, pillar-hung pulpit inside. Looking down, he saw thick-ankled women clattering past in loose wooden-soled shoes, and dumpy girls with tow-braids primly dangling to their hips, convoying sturdy Dutch-built luggers of younger brothers up the easy slope that led to the church and the bells. Presently Frau Spritzkrapfen and dainty Lottchen, rosy with soap and health, slipped through the doorway beneath him out into the little church-bound throng, and, as they disappeared, left the house and street somehow unaccountably alone. Feeling this, Ronald Wyde determined on a stroll.

Something in the Sabbath stillness around him led Ronald away from the swift clang and throbbing hum of the bells and in the direction of the old cemetery. Passing through the clumsy tower-gate that lifts its grimy bulk sullenly, like a huge head-stone over the grave of a dead time of feudalism, he reached the burial-ground and entered the quiet enclosure. The usual touching reverence of the Germans for their dead was strikingly manifest around him. The humbler mounds, walled up with rough stones a foot or two above the pathway level, carried on their crests little gardens of gay and inexpensive plants ; while on the tall wooden crosses at their head hung yellow wreaths, half hiding the hopeful legend, " Wiedersehen." The more pretentious slabs bore vases filled with fresh flowers ; while in the grate-barred vaults, that skirted the ground like the arches of a cloister, lay rusty heaps of long-since mouldered bloom, topped by newer wreaths tossed lovingly in to wilt and turn to dust in their turn, like those cast in before them in memory of that other dust asleep below.

Turning aside from the central walk that halved the cemetery, Ronald strolled along, his hands in his pockets, his eyes listlessly fixed on the orange-colored fumes and rolling smoke that welled out of tall chimneys in the hollow beyond, an idle student-tune humming on his lips, and his thoughts nowhere, and everywhere, at once. Happening to look away from the dun smoke-trail for an instant, he found something of greater in-

terest close at hand. An old man stooped stiffly over a simple mound, busied among the flowers that hid it, and by his side crouched a young girl, perhaps fourteen years old, who peered up at Ronald with questioning, velvet-brown eyes. The old man heard the intruder's steps crunching in the damp gravel, and slowly looked up too.

"Good morning, mein Herr," said Ronald, pleasantly.

The old man remained for an instant blinking nervously, and shading his eyes from the full sunlight that fell on his face. A quiet face it was, and very old, seamed and creased by mazy wrinkles that played at aimless cross-purposes with each other, beginning and ending nowhere. His thick beard and thin, curved nose looked just a little Jewish, and seemed at variance with his pale blue eyes that were still bright in spite of age. And yet, bearded as he was, there was a lurking expression about his features that bordered upon effeminacy, and made the treble of his voice sound even more thin and womanish as he answered Wyde's greeting.

"Good morning, too, mein Herr. A stranger to our town, I see."

"Yes ; but soon not to be called one, I hope. I am here for the winter."

"A cold season—a cold season ; our northern winters are very chilling to an old man's blood." And slouching together into a tired stoop, he resumed his simple task of knotting a few flowers

into a clumsy nosegay. Ronald stood and watched him with a vague interest. Presently, the flowers being clumped to his liking, the old man pried himself upright by getting a good purchase with his left hand in the small of his back, and so deliberately that Ronald almost fancied he heard him creak. The girl rose too, and drew her thin shawl over her shoulders.

"You Germans love longer than we," said Ronald, glancing at the flowers that trembled in the old man's bony fingers, and then downwards to the quiet grave; "a lifetime of easy-going love and a year or two of easier-forgetting are enough for us."

"Should I forget my own flesh and blood?" asked the old man, simply.

Ronald paused a moment, and, pointing downwards, said :

"Your daughter, then, I fancy?"

"Yes."

"Long dead?"

"Very long; more than fifty years."

Ronald stared, but said nothing audibly. Inwardly he whispered something about being devilish glad to make the wandering Jew's acquaintance, rattled the loose gröschen in his pocket, and turned to follow the tottering old man and firm-footed child down the walk. After a dozen paces they halted before a more ambitious tombstone, on which Ronald could make out the well-remembered name of Plattner. The child

took the flowers and laid them reverently on the stone.

"It seems to me almost like arriving at the end of a pilgrimage," said Ronald, "when I stand by the grave of a man of science. Perhaps you knew him, mein Herr?"

"He was my pupil."

"Whew!" thought Ronald, "that makes my friend here a centenarian at least."

"My pupil and friend," the feeble voice went on; "and, more than that, my daughter's first lover, and only one."

"Ach so!" drawled Ronald.

"And now, on her death-day, I take these poor flowers from her to him, as I have done all these years."

Something in the pathetic earnestness of his companion touched Ronald Wyde, and he forthwith took his hands out of his pockets, and didn't try to whistle inaudibly—which was a great deal for him to do.

"I know Plattner well by his works," he said; "I once studied mineralogy for nearly a month."

"You love science, then?"

"Yes; like every thing else, for diversion."

"It was different with him," quavered the old man, pointing unsteadily to the head-stone. "Science grew to be his one passion, and many discoveries rewarded him for his devotion. He was groping on the track of a far greater achievement when he died."

“ May I ask what it was ? ” said Ronald, now fairly interested.

“ The creation and isolation of the principle of Life ! ”

This was too much for Ronald Wyde ; down dived his restless hands into his trowser’s pockets again, and the gröschen rattled as merrily as before.

“ I have made quite a study of biology, and all that sort of thing,” said he ; “ and, although a good deal of a skeptic, and inclined to follow Huxley, I can’t bring myself to conceive of life without organism. Such theorizing is, to my mind, on a par with the illogical search for the philosopher’s stone and a perpetual motor.”

The old man’s eyes sparkled as he turned full upon Ronald.

“ You dismiss the subject very airily, my young friend,” he cried ; “ but let me tell you that I—I, whom you see here—have grappled with such problems through a weary century, and have conquered one of them.”

“ And that one is—”

“ The one that conquered Plattner ! ”

“ Do I understand you to claim that you have discovered the life-principle ? ”

“ Yes.”

“ Will you permit an utter stranger to inquire what is its nature ? ”

“ Certainly. It is twofold. The ultimate principle of life is carbon ; the cause of its combination

with water, or rather with the two gaseous elements of water, and the development of organized existence therefrom, is electricity."

Ronald Wyde shrugged his broad shoulders a little, and absently replied,

"All I can say, mein Herr, is, that you've got the bulge on me."

"I beg your pardon—"

"Excuse me; I unconsciously translated an Americanism. I mean that I don't quite understand you."

"Which means that you do not believe me. It is but natural at your age, when one doubts as if by instinct. Would you be convinced?"

"Nothing would please me better."

With the same painful effort as before, the old man straightened himself and made a piercing clairvoyant examination into and through Ronald Wyde's eyes, as if reading the brain beyond them.

"I think I can trust you," he mumbled at last. "Come with me."

Leaning on the young girl's arm, the old philosopher faltered through the cemetery and into the town, followed by Wyde, his hands again pocketed for safety. Groups of released churchgoers, sermon-fed, met them, and once in a while some stout burgher would nod patronizingly to Ronald's guides, and get in response a shaky, side-long roll of the old man's head, as if it were mounted on a weak spiral spring. Further on they intersected a knot of students, who eyed them

askance and exchanged remarks in an undertone. Keeping on deeper into the foul heart of the town, they passed through swarms of idle children playing sportlessly, as poverty is apt to play, in the dank shadows of the narrow street. They seemed incited to mirth and ribaldry by the sight of Ronald's new friend, and one even ventured to hurl a clod at him ; but this striking Ronald instead, and he facing promptly to the hostile quarter from whence it came, caused a sudden slinking of the crowd into unknown holes, like a horde of rats, and the street was for a time empty save for the little party that threaded it. Ronald began to think that the old man's sanity was gravely called in doubt by the townsfolk, and would readily have backed out of his adventure but for the curiosity that had now got the upper hand of him.

Presently the old man sidled into a dingy doorway, like a tired beast run to earth, and Ronald followed him, not without a wish that the architect had provided for a more efficient lighting of the sombre passage-way in which he found himself. A sharp turn to the right after a dozen groping-paces, a narrow stairway, a bump or two against unexpected saliences of rough mortared wall, two steps upward and one very surprising step downward through a cavernous doorway that took away Ronald's breath for a moment, and sent it back again with a hot, creeping wave of sudden perspiration all over him, as is the way

with missteps, and two more sharp turns, brought the three into a black no-thoroughfare of a hall, whose further end was closed by a locked door. The girl here rubbed a brimstone abomination of a match into a mal-odorous green glow, and by its help the old man got a tortuous key into the snaky opening in the great lock, creakily shot back its bolt, swung open the door, and motioned Ronald to enter.

He found himself in a long and rather narrow room, with a high ceiling, duskily lighted by three wide windows that were thickly webbed and dusted, like ancestral bottles of fine crusty Port. A veritable den it was, filled with what seemed to be the wrecks of philosophical apparatus dating back two or three generations—ill-fated ventures on the treacherous main of science. Here a fat-bellied alembic lolled lazily over in a gleamy sand-bath, like a beach-lost galleon at ebb-tide; and there a heap of broken porcelain-tubing and shreds of crucibles lay like bleaching ship-ribs on a sullen shore. Beyond, by the middle window, stood a furnace, fireless, and clogged with gray ashes. Two or three solid old-time tables, built when joiners were more lavish of oaken timber than nowadays, stood hopelessly littered with retorts, filtering funnels, lamps, ringstands, and squat-beakers of delicate glass, caked with long-dried sediment, all alike dust-smirched. Ronald involuntarily sought for some huge Chaldaic tome, conveniently open at a favorite spell, or a handy

crocodile or two dangling from the square beams overhead, but saw nothing more formidable than a stray volume of "Kant's Critique of Pure Reason." Taking this up and glancing at its fly-leaf, he saw a name written in spidery German script, almost illegible from its shakiness—"Max Lebensfunke."

"Your name?" he asked.

"Yes, mein Herr," answered the old man, taking the volume and caressing it like a live thing in his fumbling hands. "This book was given to me by the great Kant himself," he added.

Reverently replacing it, he advanced a few steps toward the middle of the room. Ronald followed, and, turning away from the windows, looked further around him. In striking contrast to the undisturbed disorder, so redolent of middle-age alchemy, was the big table that flanked the laboratory through its whole length. It began with a powerful galvanic battery, succeeded by a wiry labyrinth of coils and helices, with little keys in front of them like a telegraph-office retired from business; these gave place to many-necked jars wired together by twos and threes, like oath-bound patriots plotting treason; beyond them stood a great glass globe, connected with a sizable air-pump, and filled with a complexity of shiny wires and glassware; next loomed up a huge induction-magnet, carefully insulated on solid glass supports; and at the further extremity of the table lay—a corpse.

Ronald Wyde, in spite of his many-sided experience of dissection-rooms, and morgues, and other ghastlinesses to which he had long since accustomed himself from principle, drew back at the sight—perhaps because he had come to this strange place to clutch the world-old mystery of the life-essence, and found himself, instead, confronted on its threshold by the equal mystery of death.

Herr Lebensfunke smiled feebly at this movement.

“A subject received this morning from Berlin,” he said, in answer to Wyde’s look of inquiry. “A sad piece of extravagance, mein Herr—a luxury to which I can rarely afford to treat myself.”

Ronald Wyde bent over the body and looked into its face. A rough, red face, that had seemingly seen forty years of low-lived dissipation. The blotched skin and bleary eyes told of debauchery and drunkenness, and a slight alcoholic foetidness was unpleasantly perceptible, as from the breath of one who sleeps away the effects of a carouse.

“I hope you don’t think of restoring this soaked specimen to life?” said Ronald.

“That is still beyond me,” answered the old man, mournfully. “As yet I have not created life of a higher grade than that of the lowest zoöphytes.”

“Do you claim to have done as much as that?”

“It is not an idle claim,” said Herr Lebensfunke, solemnly. “Look at this, if you doubt.”

“This” was the great crystal globe that rose

from the middle of the long table, and dominated its lesser accessories, as some great dome swells above the clustered houses of a town. Tubes passing through its walls met in a smaller central globe half filled with a colorless liquid. Beneath this, and half encircling it, was an intricate maze of bright wire ; and two other wires dipped into it, touching the surface of the liquid with their platinum tips. Within the liquid pulsed a shapeless mass of almost transparent spongy tissue.

“ You see an aggregation of cells possessed of life—of a low order, it is true, but none the less life,” said the philosopher, proudly. “ These were created from water chemically pure, with the exception of a trace of ammonia, and impregnated with liquid carbon, by the combined action of heat and induced electricity, in vacuo. Look !”

He pressed one of the keys before him. Presently the wire began to glow with a faint light, which increased in intensity till the coil flamed into pure whiteness. Removing his finger, the current ceased to flow, and the wire grew rapidly cool.

“ I passed the whole strength of sixty cups through it to show you its action. Ordinarily, with one or two carbon cells, and refining the current by triple induction, the temperature is barely blood-warm.”

“ Pardon an interruption,” said Ronald. “ You spoke of liquid carbon ; does it exist ?”

“ Yes ; here is some in this phial. See it—how pure, how transparent ! how it loves and hoards

the light !” The old man held the phial up as he spoke, and turned it round and round. “ See how it flashes ! No wonder, for it is the diamond, liquid and uncrystallized. Think how these fools of men have called diamonds precious above all gems through these many weary years, and showered them on their kings, or tossed them to their mistresses’ feet, never dreaming that the silly stone they lauded was inert, crystallized life !”

“ Can’t you crystallize diamonds yourself ?” asked Wyde, “ and make Freiberg a Golconda and yourself a Cræsus ?”

“ It could be done, after the lapse of thousands of years,” replied Herr Lebensfunke. “ Place undiluted liquid carbon in that inner globe, keep the coil at a white heat, and if Adam had started the process, his heir-at-law would have a koh-i-noor to-day, and a nice lawsuit for its possession.”

Ronald Wyde bent toward the globe once more and examined the throbbing mass closely, whistling softly meanwhile.

“ If you can create this cellular life, why not develop it still higher into an organism ?”

“ Because I can only create life — not soul. Years ago I was a freethinker, now my discoveries have made me a deist ; for I found that my cells, living as they were, and possessing undoubted parietal circulation, were not germs ; and though they might cluster into a bulk like this, as bubbles do to form froth, to evolve an animal or plant

from them was far beyond me ; that needs what we call soul. But, in searching blindly for this higher power, I grasped a greater discovery than any I had hoped for—the power to isolate life from its bodily organism.”

“ You have to keep the bottle carefully corked, I should imagine,” laughed Ronald.

“ Not quite,” said Herr Lebensfunke, joining in the laugh. “ Life is not glue. My grand discovery is the life-magnet.”

“ Which has the post of honor on your table here, has it not ?” inquired Ronald, drawing his hand from his pocket and pointing to the insulated coil.

The old man glanced keenly at his hand as he did so ; at which Ronald seemed confused, and pocketed it again abruptly.

“ Yes, that is the life-magnet. You see this bent glass tube surrounded by the helix ? That tube contains liquid carbon. I pass through the helix a current of induced electricity, generated by the action of these sixty Bunsen cups upon a succession of coils with carbon cores, and the magnet becomes charged with soulless life. I reverse the stream—what was positive now is negative, and the same magnet will absorb life from a living being to an extent only to be measured by thousands of millions.”

“ Then, what effect is produced on the body you pump the life from ?”

“ Death.”

"And what becomes of the soul?"

"I don't quite know. I fancy, however, that the magnet absorbs that too."

"Can it give it back?"

"Certainly; otherwise my life-magnet would belie its name, and be simply an ingenious and expensive instrument of death. By reversing the conditions, I can restore both soul and life to the body from which I drew them, or to another body, even after the lapse of several days."

"Have you ever done so?"

"I have."

Ronald looked reflectively downward to his boot-toe, but seemed to find nothing there—except a boot-toe.

"I say, my friend," he spoke at last, "haven't you got a pin you can stick in me? I'd like to know if I'm dreaming."

"I can convince you better than by pins," replied Herr Lebensfunke. "Let me see that hand you hide so carefully."

Ronald Wyde slowly drew it from his pocket, as reluctantly as though it were a grudged charity dole, and extended it to the old man. Its little finger was gone.

"A defect that I am foolishly sensitive about," said he. "A childish freak—playing with edged tools, you know. A boy-playmate chopped it off by accident: I cut his head open with his own hatchet, and made an idiot of him for life—that's all."

"I could do this," said Herr Lebensfunke, pausing on each word as if it were somewhat heavy, and had to be lifted out of his cramped chest by force; "I could draw your entity into that magnet, leaving you side by side with this corpse. I could dissect a finger from that same corpse, attach it to your own dead hand by a little of that palpitating life-mass you have seen, pass an electric stream through it, and a junction would be effected in three or four days. I could then restore you to existence, whole, and not maimed as now."

"I don't quite like the idea of dying, even for a day," answered Wyde. "Couldn't you contrive to lend me a body while you are mending my own?"

"You can take that one, if you like."

Ronald Wyde looked once more at the sodden features of the corpse, and smiled lugubriously.

"A mighty shabby old customer," he said, "and I doubt if I could feel at home in his skin; but I'm willing to risk it for the sake of the novelty of the thing."

The old philosopher's thin face lit up with pleasure.

"You consent, then?" he chuckled in his womanish treble.

"Of course I do. Begin at once, and have done with it."

"Not now, mein Herr; some modifications must be made in the connections—mere matters of detail. Come again to-night."

"At what hour?"

"At ten. Mein Vögelein, show the Herr the way out."

The girl, who had been moving restlessly about the room all this time, with her wild brown eyes fixed now on Ronald, now on the old man, and oftener in a shy, inquisitive stare on the corpse, lit a dusty chemical lamp and led the way down the awkward passages and stairs. Ronald tried to start a conversation with her as he followed.

"You are too young, my birdling, to be accustomed to such sights as this upstairs."

"Birdling is not too young, she's almost fourteen," said the girl, proudly. "And she likes it, too; it makes her think of mother. Mother went to sleep on that table, mein Herr."

"Poor thing! she's half-witted," thought Wyde as he passed into the street. "By-by, birdie."

Home he walked briskly, to be met under his flaming balcony by Lottchen's kindly afternoon greeting. How had mein Herr passed his Sabbath? she asked.

"Quietly enough, Lottchen. I met an old philosopher in the God's-Acre, and went home with him to his shop. Have you ever heard of Herr Doctor Lebensfunke?"

"Yes, mein Herr. Wrong here, they say;" and she tapped her wide, round German forehead, and lifted her eyes expressively heavenward.

"Sold himself to the devil, eh?" asked Wyde.

Lottchen was not quite sure on that point.

Some said one thing, and some another. There was undoubtedly a devil, else how could good Doctor Luther have thrown his inkstand at him? But he had never been seen in Doctor Lebensfunke's neighborhood; and, on the whole, Lottchen was inclined to attribute the Herr Doctor's trouble to an indefinable something whose nature was broadly hinted at by more tapping of the forehead.

Ronald Wyde mounted the stairs, locked himself in his room, and wished himself out of the scrape he was getting into. But, being in for it now, he lit a cigar, and tried to fancy the processes he would have to go through, and how he, a natty and respectable young fellow, would look and feel in a drunkard's skin. His conjectures being too foggily outlined to please him, he put them aside, and waited impatiently enough for ten o'clock.

A moonlight walk through the low streets, transfigured by the silver gleam into fairy vistas—all but the odor—brought him to Herr Lebensfunke's house. Simple birdling, on the lookout for him, piloted him through the unsafe channel, and brought him to anchor in the dimly-lit room.

"All is ready," said the philosopher, as he trembled forward and shook Ronald's hand. "See here." Zig-zags of silk-bound wire squirmed hither and thither from the life-magnet. Two of them ended in carbon points. "And here, too, my young friend, is your new finger."

It lay, detached, in the central globe, and on its

severed end atoms of protoplasm were already clustered. "Literally a second-hand article," thought Ronald; but, not venturing to translate the idiom, he only bowed and said, "Ach so!" which means any thing and every thing in German.

It was not without a very natural sinking of the heart that Ronald Wyde divested himself of his clothing, and took his position, by the old man's direction, on the stout table, side by side with the dead. A flat brass plate pressed between his shoulders, and one of the carbon points, clamped in a little insulated stand, rested on his bosom and quivered with the quickened motion of the heart beneath it. The other point touched the dead man's breast.

"Are you ready?"

"Yes."

The old man pressed a key, and as he did so a sharp sting, hardly worse than a leech's bite, pricked Ronald Wyde's breast. A sense of languor crept slowly upon him, his feet tingled, his breath came slowly, and waves of light and shade pulsed in indistinct alternation before his sight; but through them the old man's eyes peered into his, like a dream. Presently Ronald would have started if he could, for two old philosophers were craning over him instead of one. But as he looked more steadily, one face softly dimmed into nothing, and the other grew brighter and stronger in its lines, while the room flushed with an unaccount-

able light. The little key clicked once more ; a vague sensation that the current had somehow ceased to flow, roused him, and he raised himself on his elbow and looked in blank bewilderment at his own dead self lying by his side in the daylight, while the sunrise tried to peer through the webbed panes.

“ Is it over ? ” he asked, with a puzzled glance around him ; and added, “ Which am I ? ”

“ Either, or both,” answered Herr Lebensfunke. “ Your identity will be something of a problem to you for a day or two.”

Aided by the old man, Ronald awkwardly got into the sleazy clothes that went with the exchange—growing less and less at home each minute. He felt weak and sore ; his head ached, and the wound left by the fresh amputation of his little finger throbbed angrily.

“ I suppose I may as well go now,” he said. “ When can I get my own self there back again ? ”

“ On Thursday night, if all works well,” said the old man. “ Till then, good-day.”

Ronald Wyde's first impulse, as he shambled into the open air, was to go home ; but he thought of the confusion his sadly-mixed identity would cause in Frau Spritzkrappen's quiet household, and came to a dead stop to consider the matter. Then he decided to quit the town for the interminable four days—to go to Dresden, or anywhere. His next step was to slouch into the nearest beer-cellar and call for beer, pen, and paper. While waiting

for these, he surveyed his own reflection in the dingy glass that hung above the table he sat by—a glass that gave his face a wavy look, as if seen through heated air. He felt an amused pride in his altered appearance, much as a masquerader might be pleased with a clever disguise, and caught himself wondering whether he were likely to be recognized in it. Apparently satisfied of his safety from detection, he turned to the table and wrote a beer-scented note to Frau Spritzkrapfen, explaining his sudden absence by some discreet fiction. He got along well enough till he reached the end, when, instead of his own flowing sign-manual, he tipsily scrawled the unfamiliar name of Hans Kraut. Tearing the sheet angrily across, he wrote another, and signed his name with an effort. He was about to seek a messenger to carry his note, when it occurred to him to leave it himself, which he did ; and had thereby the keen satisfaction of hearing pretty Lottchen confess, with a blush on her fair German cheek, that they would all miss Herr Wyde very much, because they all loved him. Turning away with a sigh that was very like a hiccough, he trudged to the railway-station and took a ticket to Dresden, going third-class as best befitting his clothes and appearance.

He felt ashamed enough of himself as the train rumbled over the rolling land between Freiberg and the capital, and gave him time to think connectedly over what had happened, and what he now was. His fellow-passengers cast him sidelong

looks, and gave him a wide berth. Even the quaint, flat-arched windows of one pane each, that winked out of the red-tiled roofs like sleepy eyes, seemed to leer drunkenly at him as they scudded by.

Ronald Wyde's account of those days in Dresden was vague and misty. He crept along the bustling streets of that sombre, gray city, that seemed to look more natural by cloud-light than in the full sunshine, feeling continually within him a struggle between the two incompatible natures now so strangely blended. Each day he kept up the contest manfully, passing by the countless beer-cellars and drinking-booths with an assumption of firmness and resolution that oozed slowly away toward nightfall, when the animal body of the late Hans Kraut would contrive to get the better of the animating principle of Ronald Wyde; the refined nature would yield to the toper's brute-craving, with an awful sense of its deep degradation in so succumbing, and, before midnight, Hans was gloriously drunk, to Ronald's intense grief.

Time passed somehow. He had memories of sunny lounges on the Bruhl'sche Terrace, looking on the turbid flow of the eddied Elbe, and watching the little steamboats that buzzed up and down the city's flanks, settling now and then, like gad-flies, to drain it of a few drops of its human life. Well-known friends, whose hands he had grasped not a week before, passed him unheedingly; all save one, who eyed him for a moment, said "Poor

devil !” in an undertone, and dropped a silber-gro’ into his maimed hand. He felt glad of even this lame sympathy in his lowness ; but most of all he prized the moistened glance of pity that flashed upon him from the great dark eyes of a lovely girl who passed him now and then as he slouched along. Once, a being as degraded and scurvy as his own outward self, turned to him, called him “Dutzbruder,” asked him how he left them all in Berlin, stared at Ronald’s blank look of non-recognition, and passed on with a muttered curse on his own stupidity in mistaking a stranger, in broad daylight, for his crony Kraut.

Another memory was of the strange lassitude that seemed to almost paralyze him after even moderate exertion, and caused him to drop exhausted on a bench on the terrace when he had shuffled over less than half its length. More than once the suspicion crept upon him that only a portion of his vitality now remained to him, and that its greater part lay mysteriously coiled in Herr Lebensfunke’s life-magnet. And this, in turn, broadened into a doubting distrust of the Herr himself—a dread lest the old man might in some way appropriate this stock of life to his own use, and so renew his fast-expiring lease for a score or two of years to come. At last this dread grew so painfully definite, that he hurried back to Freiberg a day before his appointed time, and once more found his twofold self wandering through its devious streets.

It was long after dark, and a thin rain slanted on the slippery stones, as he again made his way through the deserted and sleepy paths of the town to the old philosopher's house. He was wet, chilled, weary, and sick enough at heart as he leaned against the cold stone doorway and waited for an answer to his knock. The splash of the heavier rain-drops from the tiled leaves was the only sound he heard for many minutes, until, at last, pattering feet neared him on the inside, and a child's voice asked who was there. To his friendly response the door was opened half-wide, and Vögelein's blank, pretty face peeped through.

Was Herr Lebensfunke at home? No; he had said that he wasn't at home; but then, she thought he was in the long room where mamma went to sleep. Could he be seen? No, she thought not; he was very tired, and, in her own—Vögelein's—opinion, he was going to sleep too, just as mamma did. And the wizened little face, with its eldritch eyes and tangled hair, was withdrawn, and the door began to close. Ronald forced himself inside, and grasped the child's arm.

“Vögelein, don't you know me?”

The girl, in nowise startled, gravely set her flickering candle on the door-step, looked up at him wonderingly, as if he were an exhibition, and said she thought not, unless he had been asleep on the table.

“Good heavens!” cried Ronald, “can this

child talk of nothing but people asleep on a table?"

But, as he spoke, a thought whirled through his brain. He drew the poor half-witted thing close to him and asked :

"Can Vögelein tell me something about mamma, and how she went to sleep?"

The child rambled on, pleased to find a listener to her foolish prattle. All he could connect into a narrative was, that the girl's mother, some seven or eight years before, had been drained of her life by the awful magnet, and that, as the child said, "the Herr Doctor ever since had talked just like mamma."

His dread was well founded, then. The old man's one dream and aim was to prolong his wretched life ; could he doubt that he would not now make use of the means he had so unwisely thrown in his way ? He turned about, half mad-dened.

"Girl !" he cried, "I must see the old man ! Where is he ?"

He couldn't see him, she whined. He was asleep up there, on the table. At one o'clock he had said he would wake up.

He pushed past her, mounted to the long room, pressed open the unfastened door, and entered.

The old man and the corpse of his former self lay together under the light of a lamp that swung from the beam overhead. An insulated carbon point was directed to each white, still breast.

From the old man's hand a cord ran to a key beyond, arranged to make or break connection at a touch. By it stood a clock, with a simple mechanism attached that bore upon a second key like the first, evidently planned to press upon it when the hands should mark a given hour. The child had said that he would wake at one, and it was now past midnight.

Ronald Wyde comprehended it all now. The wily old man's feeble life had been withdrawn into the great magnet, and mixed therein with what remained of his own. In less than an hour the key would fall, and the double stream would flow into and animate his young body, which would then wake to renewed life ; while the cast-off shell beside it, worn to utter uselessness by a toilsome century, would be left to moulder as a moth'd garment.

Surely no time was to be lost ; his life depended upon instant action. And yet, comprehending this, he went to work slowly, and as a somnambulist might, acting almost by instinct, and well knowing that a blunder now meant irrevocable death.

Carefully disengaging the cord from the old man's yet warm grasp, and setting the carbon point aside, he lifted the shrivelled corpse and bore it away, to cast it on the white rubbish-heap in one corner. Returning to his work, he stripped himself, and laid down in the old man's place. As he did so, the distant Minster bells rang the three-quarters.

Was there yet time ?

He braced his shoulders firmly against the brass plate under them, and moved the carbon point steadily back to its place, with its tip resting on his breast ; the silk-wrapped wire that dangled between it and the magnet quivering, as he did so, as with conscious life. Drawing a long breath, he tightened the cord, and heard a faint click as the key snapped down.

The same sharp sting as before instantly pricked his breast, tingling thrills pulsed over him, beats of light and shadow swept before his eyes, and he lost all consciousness. For how long he knew not. At last he felt, rather than saw, the lamp-rays flickering above him, and opened his eyes as though waking from a tired sleep. Sitting up, he gave a fearful look around him, as if dreading what he might see. The drunkard's body lay stretched and motionless beside him, and the clock marked three. He was saved !

Slipping down from his perilous bed, he resumed the old familiar garments that belonged to him as Ronald Wyde, shuddering with emotion as he did so. Only pausing to give one look at the pale heap in the shadowy corner, and at the other sleeper under the now dying lamp, he quitted the room and locked its heavy door upon the two silent guardians of its life-secrets. When he reached the street, he found the rain had ceased to drop, and that the cold stars blinked over the slumbrous town.

Before noon he had taken leave of Frau Spritz-

krapfen, turned buxom Lottchen scarlet all over by a hearty, sudden, farewell-kiss, and was far on his way from Freiberg, with its red-vined balcony and its dark laboratory, never again to visit it or them. And as the busy engine toiled and shrieked, and with each beat of its mighty steam-heart carried him further away, his thoughts flew back and clustered around witless, brown-eyed birdling. Poor child, he never learned her fate.

* * * * *

I heard this strange story from its hero, one sunny summer morning as we swept over the meadowy reaches of the Erie Railway, or hung along the cliffside by the wooded windings of the Susquehanna. When he had ended it, he smiled languidly, and, showing me his still-mutilated hand, said that the old doctor's job had been a sad bungle, after all. In fact, the only physical proof that remained to verify his story, was a curved blue spot where the ingoing current from the magnet had carried particles from the carbon point and lodged them beneath the skin. Psychologically, he was sadly mixed up, he said; for, since that time, he had felt that four lives were joined in him—his own, the remnant of Herr Lebensfunke's miserable hoard merged in that of poor birdling's mother, and, last of all, Hans Kraut's.

He left the cars soon afterward at Binghamton, watchfully followed by a stout, shabby man with a three days' beard stubbling his chin, who had occupied the seat in front of us, and had turned now

and then to listen for a moment to Ronald's rapid narration.

A week later, and I heard that he was dead—having committed suicide in a fit of delirium soon after his admission to the Binghamton Inebriate Asylum. The attendant who made him ready for burial noticed a singular blue mark on his left breast, that looked, he said, a little like a horse-shoe magnet.

OSGOOD'S PREDICAMENT.

BY ELIZABETH D. B. STODDARD.

OSGOOD took a cane-bottomed chair whose edges had given way from the application of boot-soles, cane and umbrella ferules, and studied his predicament. He commenced this necessary study early in the morning in his room, which was in a boarding-house situated in this metropolis. The early carts were taking their way down town through a blue haze, which in the country prefigured a golden day. The milkman, the walk-sweeper, and the rag-picker, were the only creatures moving in Osgood's neighborhood. The time was propitious for meditation and resolve, but Osgood's head was not ready. The still Champagne that he had drunk the night before buzzed in his brain. With a glass of it in his hand, under a side gas-light, in the drawing-room of his Aunt Formica, he had proposed marriage to a handsome dashing

girl, and the handsome dashing girl had accepted him. They swallowed the bubbles on the "beaker's brim," thinking it was the Cup of Life they were drinking from. Neither supposed that the moment was one of exhilaration or enthusiasm. Osgood never felt so serious, or so determined to face the music, as he called it, which was the short for a philosophical design to march boldly through life, and shoulder its necessities with a brave spirit and a martial air.

Osgood was intelligent, agreeable, and handsome. He had advanced no further into life than to give this impression. He knew nothing more of himself than that he was intelligent, handsome, and "plucky." He had no father or mother, but he had an aunt who had married Mr. Formica; this pair, effete in themselves, belonged to that mysterious class who are always able to get their relatives places under Government. When Osgood was eighteen they obtained a place in the Sub-Treasury, which yielded him the income of fifteen hundred dollars. Aunt Formica expected a great deal from him in the way of deportment and dress. The exigencies of his position, she observed, compelled him to do as those around him did. Of course he never laid up any of his salary, but he kept out of debt, and in doing this he fulfilled the highest duty that came within his province. His associates were young men who had more money than he, and who expected him to spend as much as they spent. The houses he visited were in-

habited by people who took it for granted that all who came in contact with them were as rich as themselves. The Formica interest was large. When he went to Washington with his aunt, he went the rounds of the senators' houses and hotels in the way of calls, dinners, and parties. When he went to Boston with her he began his visits at the right hand of Beacon Street, and branched into the streets behind it, where as good blood abides, though it has not the same advantage of the air of the Common. Wherever he went expense was involved, in the way of gloves, bouquets, cards, fees to errand boys, exchange of civilities in lunches, cigars, ale, brandy, sherry, stage, hack, and car fare, which he bore like a hero.

Lily Tree, the girl whom he proposed to marry, belonged to a family of the Formica species. It sailed through society all a-taut with convention, and was *comme il faut* from stem to stern. Lily and Osgood had always known each other. They passed through the season of hoop and ball, dancing-school, tableaux, and charades together; sympathized in each other's embryonic flirtations; and were such fast friends that no one ever dreamed of any danger to them from love. But as the wagon that goes from the powder-mill in safety innumerable times at last carries the keg which explodes it, so Osgood and Lily at last touched the divine spark which threw them out of their old world into one they had not anticipated.

This was part of Osgood's predicament.

What made him do as he had done ?

Why had Lily accepted him ?

She would never, he argued, consent to go out of the area which bounded her ideas, and which comprised a small portion of New York, Boston, Washington, and the tour of Europe, which meant a week in London, six months in Paris, and ten days in Rome. Unless he descended from the Sub-Treasury, and sought some business, such as making varnish, glue, buttons, soap, sarsaparilla, or sewing machines, could he marry ? What shrewdness had he in the place of capital to bring to bear on the requirements of these Yankee callings ? How he worried over the prospect which looked so pleasant the night before ! Champagne, flowers, light, and perfume were gone from it. He pitied himself in his helplessness. The thought of Lily deprived of her delicate evening dresses, her diurnal bouquets, caramels, and her pecunious caprices, was not pleasant. He could not see her in any light that made her so agreeable as in the light that he must certainly cause her to lose.

Something practical must be done.

Naturally he looked into his pocket-book. There was eighteen dollars in it—all the money he had. It was the last day in the month, however, and he was entitled to draw one hundred and twenty-five dollars. He shut his pocket-book and looked into his closet. He found there several pairs of patent-leather boots and a brilliant dressing-gown. " Pooh ! " he said, peevishly, and shut

the door. He then examined his bureau : in its drawers were many socks, shirts, cravats, four sets of studs and sleeve-buttons, and five scarf-pins. He rattled the studs and buttons thoughtfully ; but nothing came of it, and he closed the drawers. His eye then fell on a dress-coat which he had worn for the first time the evening before. He resolved to take the coat back to Wiedenfeldt, his tailor. This resolve was the nucleus probably of his future undertakings. He finished dressing and left the house. Before reaching Wiedenfeldt he purchased and drank a bottle of Congress Water. He also stopped at a favorite restaurant and made an excellent breakfast, and came away with a "Relampagos"—a small cigar of superior flavor—and three daily papers. His interview with Wiedenfeldt was satisfactory ; the coat was taken back, and when he had settled the matter he felt as if a beginning had been made in a new and right direction.

That afternoon he drew his pay, and walked up town. The moment he entered his room his predicament fell upon him again, and his spirits sunk. He sat on the edge of his bed, so quiet in his misery that he began to hear the ticking of the watch in his pocket ; it associated itself in his mind with the sound and motion of railroad-cars. He felt himself traveling hundreds of miles away, listening all the while to a rhythmic sound, which said, "Many a mile, many a mile." Why should he not go "many a mile, many a mile," in reality ? He went out immediately and bought a valise.

After that his demeanor was settled and tranquil. He then wrote three notes—to his chief, his Aunt Formica, and Lily. The first was a note of resignation; the second conveyed the information to his aunt that he was sick of his place, had thrown it up, and was going out of town for a change of air. He regretted, when he began his note to Lily, that he had not sent her some flowers. A momentary impulse to go and see her stayed his hand; but he remembered that she must be at Mrs. Perche's "sit-down supper" that evening, and resumed writing. He begged her to enjoy herself, and not miss him while he was away. He did not know what to write besides, but put in a few chaotic expressions which might or might not mean a great deal.

While he put a few necessary articles in the valise he wondered where he should go, never dropping the thought that he must go somewhere. The remainder of his wardrobe, including the brilliant dressing-gown, he packed in a trunk and locked it.

He rang the bell, and when the waiter came up asked for the landlady, Mrs. Semmes. The waiter thought that it was not too late to see her in her own parlor, and lingered, with his hand on his chin and his eyes on the valise.

"Jem," said Osgood, "I have left some boots in the closet, and some shirts in the drawers, which are at your service."

The alacrity with which Jem changed his atti-

tude and expression struck Osgood with a sense of pain. "How horribly selfish servants are!" he thought, taking his way down stairs. Mrs. Semmes hoped there was no trouble, and asked him to be seated. He looked at her earnestly; she was the only one to say farewell to. Never had he looked Mrs. Semmes in the face before; he had only seen the hand into which he had placed the price of his board.

"I came to tell you, Mrs. Semmes, that I am about to leave town for the present. Will you allow my trunk to remain here? If I do not return in a year and a day, break it open."

Mrs. Semmes promised to keep the trunk; took some money due her; wondered at his going away at that time of year, and asked him his destination.

"I think I shall go to Canada," he answered, vaguely.

"There must be snow there, by the accounts."

"Where shall I go?" he was about to say, but checked himself.

"If you were going East," she continued, "you would find the ground bare enough, especially in the neighborhood of the sea: the sea-winds melt the snow almost as soon as it falls."

"I think I will go East," he said, musingly. He sat so long without saying any thing, staring straight before him, that Mrs. Semmes began to feel fidgety. She recalled him to the present by walking to the window. He started, bade her good-by, and retired.

He tossed about all night in a feverish sleep, tormented with dreams which transformed Lily into a small child which he was compelled to carry in his arms, or furnished his Aunt Formica with a long spear, with which she pursued him, and was forever on the point of overtaking him.

At 8 o'clock A.M. he might have been seen by a detective at the Twenty-seventh Street dépôt. A few minutes after he was going through the tunnel; and, emerging from that, he considered himself fairly divided from New York. At the first station beyond the State-line of Massachusetts he consulted a map, and concluded to stop at the junction of the Old Colony Railroad. There he changed the route, and in the evening reached a town which seemed waiting to go somewhere else, where he passed the night.

The next morning he started on his travels again toward Cape Cod. Five miles beyond a large village, in a flat, sterile, gloomy region, he alighted with his baggage, and said, "This is the place for me." The train went on, and the dépôt-master went into his little den without noticing Osgood. Several tall school-girls, who had come to watch for the train, strolled down a cross-road, and he was alone. He went to the end of the platform and surveyed the country. He stood on the edge of a wide plateau along which ran the railroad-track. Beyond that a road deviated through dismal fields, by unpainted houses, large barns, and straggling orchards. Below the plateau a wide

marsh extended, intersected by crooked creeks, which gnawed into the black earth like worms. A rim of sea bordered the tongue of the marsh, but it was too far off to add life to the scene. The sedge, giving up all hope of being moistened by the salt waves, had died in great circles, which looked like mats of gray hair on some pre-Adamite monster's buried head.

Osgood determined to pursue the windings of the road. He plowed the sand for two miles, and at a sudden turn of the road came upon a house, with a number of barns and sheds attached to it. A dog with a stiff tail ran out from a shed and barked at him, and a pale-faced woman in a muslin cap appeared at a window of the house. He knocked at the door : she opened it.

"Will thee come in?" she asked.

He entered, following her as he would have followed a ghost. She moved a chair from the wall without the least noise, and he dropped upon it. As he looked at her his identity seemed slipping away—seemed to be slipping into an atmosphere connected with her and her surroundings. She brought him some water which she dipped from a pail near by, and held the cocoa-nut dipper which contained it to his lips.

"Thee has come to us from strange parts, I reckon, from thy looks."

"Yes," he answered, absently; "I needed change."

"There has been no change here since the

Indians went away. If thee will look across the road thee can see the ground is strewed with the bits of shells from their feasts."

He went to the window, and again remarked to himself, "This is the place for me."

"Could you," he asked, going toward her, "let me stay with you a while?"

"Did thee come to the Marsh End station this morning?"

"Yes; my valise is there."

"Thy parents are rich?"

"I have none."

"Thee has been well cared for, though."

"I have not left home because of any—" Misfortune, he was about to say, but that did not seem to be the right word; so he tried to think of something else to say. She saw his embarrassment, and said, quickly,

"I never have harbored a stranger; but if Peter likes, he may take thee."

Osgood thanked her so pleasantly that she determined he should stay. She asked him his name, his age, his place of residence, his business, and his intentions. Except in regard to the latter, his answer proved satisfactory; and when Peter returned at noon from the distant shore with a load of sea-weed, she introduced Osgood as if he were an old acquaintance of whom Peter was in a state of lamentable ignorance. He pushed his hat on the back of his head, shook hands with Osgood, and said, "Maria, will thee give me my dinner?"

taking no further notice of Osgood till she had placed it on the table. It consisted of stewed beans, boiled beef, apple-pie, and cheese. Osgood ate half a pie, and established himself in Peter's good graces.

"Thee will learn that Maria's pie-crust beats all," he said.

"Thee is ready to consent," said his wife, "to keep young Osgood a while?"

"I don't know yet," answered Peter.

But after dinner he harnessed his horse and went to the dépôt for Osgood's valise, which he carried up-stairs and deposited in the spare room. He then invited Osgood to take a look at the premises. He wished to make his own investigations in regard to Osgood without Maria's intervention. They lingered by the pig-sty, and while Peter scratched the pigs with a cord-wood stick, exchanged views of men and things. Peter saw the capabilities of Osgood's character, and easily divined the manner of life he had led. He knew him to be selfish from ignorance, and because he had early formed the habits which impose self-indulgence. Something in the young man's bearing won his heart—a certain impetuous simplicity and frankness which made him long to be of service to a nature unlike his own. Osgood found Peter genial, shrewd, and sad. Such a man he had never met. It seemed to him that Peter could set him straight in his own estimation; there was no nonsense about the old man, and yet he could see deep feeling in his dark,

cavernous eyes. The feeling which had oppressed him passed away, and another took its place which contained restoration, and faith in the future. He got into Peter's way by attempting to help fodder the cattle and "slick up" the barn. When the work was done, and while Peter fastened the barn-doors with an ox-bow, Osgood looked about him. It was a March afternoon ; no wind blew, and no sun shone ; but the gray round of the sky, which neither woods nor hills hid from his sight, rolled over him in soft commotion. The reddish, barren fields stretched in their flatness beyond his vision, and the narrow roads of yellow sand ran to nowhere. The world of God, he thought, he saw for the first time ; and, away from the world of men, felt himself a *man*.

He looked so kindly upon Maria when he entered the house that she delayed the stream of the tea-kettle which she held over the teapot to admire him. The supper was the dinner—cold, with an addition of warm biscuits ; and again Osgood ate himself into Peter's good graces.

The evening was passed in silence. Peter smoked, Maria mended, and Osgood reflected. A violent storm arose in the night, which lasted three days. They were improved by Maria and Peter in overhauling garden-seeds in the garret, and in setting up a leach-tub in the wood-house. Osgood assisted. When he was alone with Maria she talked to him of the boy who was lost at sea, and of the girl who died in childhood ; with the

hungry eyes of a bereaved mother she looked upon him, and his heart was touched with a new tenderness. When he was alone with Peter the old man sounded the depths of the young man's soul with wise, pathetic, quaint speech ; he went over the ground of his own life, which had been passed on the spot where he now was, with the exception of several mackerel voyages, and one in a merchant vessel to some of the southern ports of Europe. But when together Peter and Maria never talked with Osgood on personal matters. Between them a marital silence was kept, which was more expressive than the conjugal volubility which ordinarily exists ; it proved that they had passed through profounder experiences.

When the storm ceased Peter went to the station for his Boston newspaper, which he read to Maria, who took it afterward and read it over to herself. Brother Quakers, Peter's neighbors, who lived out of sight, dropped in from time to time to exchange a word with Maria, or hold talks outside with Peter, with one foot in the rut and the other on the wagon-step. The present subject of interest, Osgood discovered, was the approaching Quarterly Meeting, and the mackerel fishery. Peter asked him to accompany himself and Maria to the town where the meeting was to be. They breakfasted at sunrise, when the day arrived, in full dress—Peter in a snuff-colored suit, and Maria in a series of brown articles—dress, shawl, and bonnet. They started in good spirits in an open wagon,

with an improvised seat for Peter in front. Beyond a belt of pine woods stood the meeting-house, and a mile beyond the meeting-house lay the town, before a vast bay. Osgood drove alone into the town, and spent several hours there. He visited the shops to find some trifle for Maria, and then went through the town down to the shore. How happy he grew in the pure wind and the gay morning light ! The gulls rode over the foaming wave-crests and dipped into their green walls, and hawks swooped between the steadfast sky and heaving deep. The sea traveled round and round before his eyes with a mad joy, and tempted him to plunge into it. He wrote his name in the heavy sand with a broken shell, and the water filtered out the letters ; then he paved it in pebbles with the word *Strength*.

Peter and Maria were waiting for him when he returned to the meeting-house with the wagon.

"Thee has been skylarking," she said.

"After something for you," he answered, putting in her hand a handsome work-basket.

"Has thee so much money that thee must waste it on me, Osgood ?"

But she was pleased with the gift. They rode home amicably. Peter, as a favor, allowed Osgood to drive, while he imparted to Maria sundry bits of information gained at the meeting.

"Mackerel" went in and out at Osgood's ears without gaining his attention, till he caught at something Peter said about the *Bonita*. He

listened. Three vessels were about to sail from the town on a mackerel voyage, and the *Bonita* was one of them. He comprehended that Peter owned half the *Bonita*, and a plan struck him. He inquired into the subject, and obtained its history. That evening he proposed going on a mackerel voyage, which proposal so fired Peter that he declared he had a mind to go too ; but Maria quenched his enthusiasm by going over the programme of work that must be done at home. She made no opposition to Osgood's going, but set before him in plain terms the hardships of such a voyage. He was not to be deterred, and Peter gave his consent, promising him a small share of the profits.

Osgood wrote to his Aunt Formica that night, assuring her that he already felt much better, and that he was about to enter into a new business, of which she should hear more. He also wrote Lily Tree a minute, lengthy epistle. He described his situation with Peter and Maria ; told her how much board he paid—two dollars and fifty cents a week—and how well he had learned to do chores. He fed the pigs every day ; he wished that she could see how well they thrived on the diet lately introduced by Peter and himself—a dry mash of boiled potatoes and meal, with an occasional horse-shoe thrown in as a relish. Would she, he wondered, have enjoyed the day that he, Maria, and Peter made soft soap ? He mentioned his intended voyage, and asked her if she liked sailors. Could

he have the hope, he continued, of her sympathy in his future enterprises, which perhaps would differ from those she had thought of for him? He avowed a change in himself. Would it affect her?

He sealed his letters, and began pacing his little room. Writing home had brought his old life near him again; the distance it had come to reach him seemed enormous.

"It was only a few days ago," he thought, "and yet I am so different!"

He rolled up his paper window-curtain and softly raised the window. The moon made the landscape look more vast and desolate than it was in the light of day. Under the horizon it revealed a strip of sea which shone as if it were the portal of another world whose light was reflected thereon. Osgood felt that he was an imprisoned soul this side of it. The light gave him an intimation of immortality. "Where is Lily's soul?" he asked. "Has she any dream beyond the life she is in?"

When Lily received Osgood's note she was angry; so was Mrs. Formica when she received hers. An intuition that Osgood repented his rashness touched Lily's pride, and preserved her silence. When the second letter came, she thought he had the intention of experimenting with her; a test, she concluded, was unendurable, not to be submitted to. Should she test him, and proclaim the engagement she meditated? it would be a relief to do something. She could not reach him with a letter, for he had gone on a mackerel

voyage beyond the limits of the post-office. She decided differently according to the light she had. Unlike Osgood, she was chained to the place she was in. She was alone, too ; her mother was occupied with neuralgia, and her father was out of town half his time, on mysterious agencies which referred to canals. The newspaper reporters at Albany were well acquainted with Mr. Tree's name while they were putting into short-hand the doings of the Legislature. Mrs. Formica had no suspicion that Lily was the cause of Osgood's disappearance ; she would not have regretted his absence so much on these grounds, for a match with Lily was not desirable.

Within a month Lily's engagement to Mr. Barclay Dodge was announced. He was a young man of fortune, whose father owed his rise in the world to corn starch, and who had made himself known by spending large sums of money on pictures, landscapes mostly, which had been indorsed by the public in exhibitions.

Mr. Barclay Dodge was happy ; he had for more than two years followed Lily through all vicissitudes attendant upon the career of a young girl in society. From an exhilaration the pursuit had become a desperation. He had never suspected any man of being his rival, and accounted for the acquaintance between Lily and Osgood by believing that Lily was related to the Formica family. How she managed so suddenly to convince Barclay Dodge that it was safe for him to propose is a

mystery which none but a disappointed, contrary woman may reveal. He had the usual penetration of his sex in regard to such mysteries ; he was a man of sense and experience, but he was in love, and when a man is in love he only analyzes himself, and all that he learns is, that his love must be gratified.

In the whirl of his attentions, and the congratulations of her friends, the time passed quickly ; not so quickly, however, as to avert the plan by which the Fates were to bring her to a knowledge of herself.

Barclay proposed an immediate marriage. Lily declined the proposal with so much vehemence that he dared not insist. He pulled his mustache in rage after he left her, and wondered why he did not insist. By what means, he cogitated, could he make her yield her will to his ? Her resistance he set down to coyness ; all women had freaks ; they were alike in such matters. He divined after a while that she would let go the lasso at any moment if he proved restive ; so he played the submissive to perfection. If she ever saw his eyes flame, or any gesture which contained a threat, he never knew it ; but every revelation from him was a revelation to her of herself, and this was to be her education and her punishment.

"Where is your friend Osgood ?" he asked once. "He has been away a long time," she answered, looking him full in the face, but with rather a stony expression in her eyes.

"He is your relative?"

"Oh no."

"No? I thought so, always seeing you in the same places."

"Our families have been acquainted always."

"Do you think he is handsome?"

"Yes."

"He is too short" (Barclay was tall), "and his eyes have a wandering, unsettled look."

"He is following his destiny by them," she answered, bitterly. "I wish that I could follow mine as a man can."

"Do you mean that you would like to follow Osgood's eyes?"

"By no means; I must see destiny by your eyes."

The words were pleasant, but the tone was malicious. It made his heart bound as if an invisible foe had come into his atmosphere to do battle with him, and he could do nothing.

"With the vapors all around, and the breakers on our lee,
Not a light is in the sky, not a light is on the sea.'—

barring the lantern abaft," roared Osgood, from the deck of the schooner *Bonita*, which was tossing outside Cape Malabar.

"You may sing t'other side of your mouth afore long," bawled back the skipper. "We ain't fur from the Cormorant Rocks; the wind p'r'aps will shove us on the ledge."

"What, when we are just going home with full barrels?"

"The mackerel may be briled in Tophet for all we know."

The skipper was at the helm ; Osgood and he were in the radius of a lantern which revealed their faces to each other. Outside of that was pitch darkness ; the rain drove in fierce slants against them, and the wind howled all round the sea.

The skipper did not look concerned, neither did Osgood ; but they were both wondering which would first break over the *Bonita*, the light of morning or the sea.

"Them boys are asleep, I s'pose, wet to the bone?" the skipper yelled.

"Yes."

"Let 'em sleep ; there ain't a lanyard loose."

"What time must it be?"

"Hard onto 'leven. My old woman's turned in long afore this, *she* has ; allus goes to bed on the stroke o' nine."

"She has thought of you to-night?"

"She has give me a prayer or so ; she's the strictest kind. Now I'll luff, there is a lull comin' ; peskiest storms that have lulls in 'em. You don't hear a swashing to a distance now?"

"No."

"Hark !"

A sound, not of wind nor sea, approached them—a rapid, rushing, cutting sound.

"Up with the helm !" shrieked the skipper to himself. "God Almighty, she is down on us !"

Osgood leaped up. The bowsprit of a large ship

was over him ; he threw up his arms instinctively and caught at something ; he felt his feet drawing over the skipper's head, and that he thumped it with his boots. He knew no more. The great ship crushed and plowed the *Bonita* into the waves as easily as a plow buries in the sod the stubble of the corn-field. Nothing signaled her destruction except the exclamation of the skipper ; nothing remained in the wide sea to show it. Her timbers and the sleeping crew went to the bottom together. Morning dawned on the wild scene, revealing no floating spar, no rib of boat, no stave of tub or barrel, no sailor's hat, no remnant of sail, no shred of clothing ; the jaws of the sea had closed over all. The ship, a Liverpool liner, driven out of her course by the storm, cruised round the spot for a few hours, and then went on her way, taking Osgood with her. He had clung to the folds of the forward sail ; and there he was found with his left wrist dislocated, his body strained and sore, and his mind wandering. He was no romantic sight with his red flannel shirt, fishy trowsers, cowhide boots, and hands pickled in brine. Still the ship's surgeon took to him, and found, when Osgood came to himself, that he had taken to a gentleman. He lent him a suit of customary black, and introduced him to his acquaintances. Osgood would have enjoyed the voyage across the Atlantic but for the horror which had fallen on his mind from the catastrophe of the *Bonita*.

“ How old are you ? ” the surgeon asked him.

"About the first of March I was twenty-three ; since then I have grown so old I have lost the reckoning."

"I'll have to give you quinine, my boy."

"Give me some of the tincture of Lethe."

"It is of no use to one to forget ; don't be soft."

"Let us reason together, Sawbones."

The Doctor agreed, and Osgood began his story with, "Poor Peter," and finished it with asking, "Do you think I love her?"

"I'll bet a guinea," said the Doctor, "that she is married."

"She isn't," replied Osgood, indignantly.

"I am sure that she is engaged, as you call it, to somebody besides yourself."

"I know better."

"What do you propose doing when you get home?"

"What can I do with thirty dollars, which I left with Peter by-the-way?"

"We shall see what we shall see when we come face to face with Aunt Formica. I intend going the rounds with you in New York. I am a student."

He carried Osgood to his country-home beyond Liverpool, where they staid till the ship was ready to sail again. He amused his mother and sisters with stories of Osgood's adventures on sea and land, and represented him in the light of a "Jarley's wax-works" hero, till he was fairly cured of his melancholy.

Five months from the day on which he left New York Osgood returned, and stood on his Aunt Formica's door-steps with Dr. Black. They looked like a pair of Englishmen. Both had shiny, red noses, shiny, hard, narrow-brimmed hats, and shiny, narrow-toed boots, and the nap had brushed off their coats.

Osgood looked into the familiar area with emotion, and the Doctor looked at the windows with curiosity.

"They must be out of town," he said; "the house has been put in brown hollands."

But Osgood knew the habits of his aunt—knew that from the first of July till the first of October the house was put on an out-of-town footing; and that she skirmished between city and country, or watering-place. The bell was answered by a servant he did not know.

"I wish to see Mrs. Formica," he said, brushing past her, and entering the dark parlor. "Dr. Black and friend say."

Mrs. Formica came in a moment after with a slight air of amazement, which increased to astonishment when she saw her nephew. She gave a little yelp as he embraced her, and said, "Where *have* you been?"

"To Cape Cod, and to Europe. I have been shipwrecked, aunt—that is, I lost my mackerel venture, and have been taken care of by my noble friend, Dr. Black."

Aunt Formica grew pale at the word "ship-

wrecked," and turned to Dr. Black. Something in his face made her extend her hand and give him a warm welcome.

"Black may stay here while he is in port, mayn't he? He will amuse you with yarns about me."

"Of course," she replied. "Now tell me the whole story."

Between Osgood and the Doctor it was related.

"Why did you ever go from me?" she asked, wiping away a real tear.

"I believe, aunt, I shall keep up the business of going—it suits me. I can never live through your conventional cramps."

She did not think it prudent to combat him just then; but made a mental memorandum that something must be done that would change his foolish resolution. A plan developed at dinner that evening.

"I had a note yesterday from Mrs. Senator Conch," said Mrs. Formica. "She will be in Saratoga this week, and begs me to meet her there. Formica and I have been talking it over, Osgood, and we think that it will be pleasant for Dr. Black and you to go up for a week. You will go, Doctor?"

"Thank you, Madam, provided Osgood is not averse."

"Any of our set there?" Osgood asked.

"The Trees went up last Saturday with Barclay Dodge. They are making an extensive tour this year."

"What's Barclay Dodge along for?"

"He is engaged to Lily Tree!"

"Ah!" said Osgood, looking at the Doctor, who could not help giving him a malicious grimace. "How long since? It's a capital match, ain't it?"

"The engagement must have been announced soon after you left."

This reply put Osgood in a brown study. What impulse, he mused, had prompted Lily to give herself to Barclay Dodge? Would *he* have done so?

Dr. Black commented on Osgood's face, and considered himself in a fair way to make studies.

"As far as money goes," continued Mrs. Formica, "it may be called a good match; but certainly not as far as family goes."

"Family!" echoed Dr. Black, softly.

"His father was a tradesman," explained Mr. Formica, while Lily can go back to her great-grandfather before trade need be mentioned.

"Old Mr. Tree's father," remarked his wife, "was a brigadier-general in the Revolution."

"He was a drover, for all that," said Osgood.

Mrs. Formica changed the theme, and talked of Saratoga.

"We'll go," Osgood said, crossly; "but I must first go to my tailor."

Mrs. Formica held a private conversation with him after dinner, gave him a check, and told him not to worry about the future: she had a plan in view.

"Plans go by contraries with me, aunt."

"You owe it to me not to be perverse."

"I can't pay any debt."

Previous to going to bed Dr. Black and Osgood smoked several cigars.

"You strike me," said the Doctor, "as growing to the dramatic just now. One event runs into another with monstrous rapidity among you Americans. How you differ from the English! How is it that you catch fortune by the hair so?"

"We are passionate and quick-witted."

"And then you repudiate with ease."

"Bah! you imitate Sydney Smith."

"I did not mean in the sense of State bonds precisely."

"I think," Osgood groaned, "that I begin to feel like a snob again. What shall I do to be saved?"

"Go on in the groove that is making for you. I'll stand by and be the chorus. When I hear thy complaints of misery I will let fall the tear; but remember that 'laws determine even the fates.'"

"Bosh!"

Except a dispute between the Doctor and Osgood concerning a slouched hat, which the Doctor would not wear, the party succeeded in starting and arriving amicably at the Union in Saratoga. In a few hours Mrs. Formica knew who was there. The Trees were at the Union. Mrs. Senator Conch had taken a cottage; but the

Senator himself had stopped at Albany for a day to confer with the Governor. Old Madam Funchal of Philadelphia was at Congress Hall, with her train, and Mrs. Romeo Pippis Bovis and husband, from Boston. All her friends were round her; that is, the traveling set she was in the habit of meeting; and her spirits rose to the occasion. These particulars she detailed, in a white muslin morning-dress, to Osgood, who, dressed in a new cream-colored suit, lounged in the doorway of a small parlor off the hall. He shouldered round just in time to come face to face with Lily Tree, who was passing on the arm of Barclay Dodge. She stopped, of course, to shake hands with Mrs. Formica, whose apparently warm kiss fell on the edge of a braid of her chestnut hair with the weight and coldness of a snow-flake. Her face settled into rigidity when she turned to speak to Osgood, and, like a transparent boy, he looked, with all the earnestness his gray eyes were capable of, straight into hers. Aunt Formica and Barclay read a story at once upon the text his countenance furnished; but they both made the mistake of believing that Lily had rejected him. Lily was too much occupied in managing her own feelings to divine Osgood's. The imperative necessity of concealment, which all tutored women feel, governed her. She laughed a great deal, though nobody said a witty thing, and kept her eyes going between Mrs. Formica and Barclay with a steadiness which equaled the movements of the wax women in the

Broadway shop windows. Mr. Formica and Dr. Black added themselves to the party, and the relief of an introduction to the Doctor came to Lily. She approached him, and his honest face induced her to skirmish lightly with him ; but not a word did he utter of the whys and wherefores of his being with Osgood. He would not, at any rate, extend his self-elected office of chorus so far as to include her. He felt a dislike toward her. She was too thin, he thought ; there was an air of wear and tear about her which was not pleasant. He felt, too, that she knew more than Osgood ; and a woman, in his estimation, should never be the intellectual superior of a man she might make choice of. But the Doctor was an Englishman ; his ideas of women had been developed by the cynical Thackeray and the material Dickens. There was a line between the two classes of women he only believed to exist—the bad capable woman and the good foolish woman—which could never be crossed by one or the other. The elements which go to make up a man, of good and evil mixed, never enter into the composition of the women of Englishmen of the present time. It is possible that Lily discovered Dr. Black's impression : she discovered it so nearly that she was certain Osgood had talked of her with him. Why had he ? she wondered.

In a few minutes the party fell apart as naturally as it had come together. Lily went on her walk with Barclay ; after which she retired to dress for

luncheon, but instead of appearing thereat kept her room till evening.

Osgood avoided every body ; he was tormented with an idea that Lily had suffered. There was no reason for his thinking so ; he derived the idea from reasoning with himself—reasoning which meeting with her had put in play. In the evening he went to the drawing-room, and waited till he saw her come in. Barclay, who was waiting too, darted toward her, but Osgood reached her first. When Barclay saw Lily take the arm which Osgood offered her, he turned away ; but changing his mind again went up to them.

“Osgood,” he said, in a frank voice, “you have not congratulated me on my engagement to your friend Lily.”

Talk of heroes and martyrs ; was not Lily both, at that moment, standing between these two men, with her hair dressed by a barber, and wearing a pale blue silk ?

She eyed with a dainty air a little bouquet she held in her hand, of tea-roses and geraniums, and applied it to her nose with great deliberation. She felt an impetus from Osgood's arm. He had not answered Barclay, but was dragging her decorously out of the drawing-room. When they were alone he spoke to her.

“I have faced death since I saw you. I have grown a man ; but until now, I did not know that I loved you. Which man do you belong to ?”

“I have faced life since I saw you,” she an-

swered, in a silvery voice, "and I belong to Barclay Dodge."

"Let us go back."

She tossed her bouquet over the railing of the veranda with a vindictive smile which would have astonished Osgood had he seen it.

Barclay was on the threshold ; he looked at Lily and missed the bouquet ; it was not in Osgood's button-hole—what could she have done with it ? He looked at Osgood, and saw that his teeth were set with a passion which he could understand. Lily sat down in the nearest chair, and the young men moved away together.

"There is no need of any nonsense between us," said Osgood ; "I was under a wrong impression regarding your engagement. I do offer my congratulations."

"Thank you," said Barclay, dubiously. And then they looked at each other with mad eyes. What a relief it would have been if they could have fought to the death !

Osgood left Barclay abruptly, and sought his Aunt Formica.

"Aunt !" he said, in a mild voice, "you need not ask Conch to blow any horn for me. I am going to sea."

"You will be better when she is married," she answered, significantly.

"I intend to before that. Your surmise is incorrect. You do not know that I ran away from Lily, as well as from you and the Sub-Treasury."

"What do you mean?"

"I offered myself to her; she accepted me, and on the strength of it I left her immediately. What do you think of me?"

"*She* is a little wretch. Did you care for her *very* much?"

"I thought she couldn't make a poor man a good wife, *after* I had asked her to be such. And I thought a poor man wouldn't be a good husband."

"It was the height of foolishness in both of you. It is most unwise for two people who have had luxuries separately to join and give them up."

"Luxuries! I wish you knew Peter and Maria."

"Osgood, you are morbid."

"Now, aunt, hear me. I am resolved to choose my own life; you must let me go. Whatever way I go, I shall not disgrace you. Formica may give me a sailor's outfit, if he chooses. Meantime let us enjoy ourselves for the remainder of the week." Notwithstanding she saw that he was determined, she applied to Senator Conch for a place, and he promised her one for Osgood in a department at Washington. When she told Osgood of it, he deigned no reply; but shook his head so fiercely that she forebore to trouble him.

Every day that he saw Lily she learned his nature by the contrast Barclay offered; she also learned to doubt herself. She never had been worthy of Osgood; it was fit that she should marry Barclay. She doubted whether she could keep up

the strain, which she knew Osgood's love would impose upon her, of self-abnegation, self-denial, isolation, and independence. She was not sure that she did not prefer enervation with Barclay to action with Osgood. Barclay watched them both. Jealousy gnawed his soul, not because he doubted Osgood, but because he had a suspicion that Lily once felt an interest in Osgood, which might be on the point of awakening. He tried experiments upon her feelings, pinched them, tore them up by the roots, extracted them with wrenches of his will, applied slow fire ; but he learned nothing. His motive was so palpable to Osgood that he more than once felt on the point of knocking him down, and had he seen any encouraging sign from Lily he would have done it. He sometimes sighed over Barclay's failure, hateful as his conduct was.

Through the torture which Barclay applied to her she saw the passion which tortured him. Could a woman have been quailed into love she would have been at his feet ; for he broke loose from his feigned submission and savagely demanded an equal return of his love. Then came the full measure of her punishment. She was incapable of rising to the strength, height, and abandon of Barclay's love. She was just as unworthy of him as she was of Osgood.

How she hated herself !

Somehow she heard that Osgood was going to sea. It is probable that Aunt Formica's feminine malice directed the disclosure to her ears. She

staggered Dr. Black a moment after she heard the report by asking if it was true.

"It is," he answered, with dignity, though inwardly scared.

She asked no other question of him, but snapped her fan together and walked away.

"Lily does not want you to go to sea," he said, when next he saw Osgood.

Osgood blew a ring of cigar smoke into the air and watched its disappearance.

"If wedding rings would only disappear that way!" said the Doctor.

Osgood blew another. "Include engagement rings," he said.

"One did vanish," replied the Doctor, slyly.

"I do not believe so. I swear she wears two this moment."

He left the Doctor, shut himself in his room, and wrote a long letter to Peter about himself, Lily, and Barclay, and posted it.

"Peter will understand me," he thought; "and more than that, he will understand Lily."

The last day of the Formicas' stay in Saratoga came. Osgood and Dr. Black appeared in traveling costume. Lily saw them enter the breakfast-room, and followed them with her father. As she passed their chairs, she asked, "Do you go to-day?" Osgood bowed. Dr. Black engaged Mr. Tree in making a remark.

"Why do you go?" she asked.

"Because Barclay stays," he whispered.

She turned a fiery red and passed on. He looked across the table once and met her eyes. She thought they said "*Farewell.*" A wild wish rose in her heart which compelled all her nature to give way to it, to speak to him once more ; to see him alone, and force him to tell her if he loved her. She resolved to find him somewhere, at all hazards.

Dr. Black watched her also. His comment was, that she was "coming to a crisis," and was beautifully following out the laws which governed her sex. "Why can't they be something without hysterics?" he lamented. "Osgood will break down if he is not got away." He mechanically turned back his wristbands.

Lily waited in an ante-room, whose door Osgood must pass on his way out, and when he came, beckoned to him.

"Say your farewell to me as you feel it," she said, her eyes in a blaze.

"I can not."

"You shall."

Her eyes and her voice threw him into a tumult ; had he followed the desire which assailed him, he would have taken her in his arms and carried her off. As it was, he looked at her, with a far-off look, as if he were calling some one to his aid.

"Osgood, Osgood !" she cried.

"Lily !"

She wrung her hands.

"Lily !" he said again.

"No, no, you need not speak ; you may go."

Both of them gained a victory.

"After I have gone," he said, "if you think it proper, will you visit Peter and Maria?"

"Peter and Maria?"

"The friends I found when I left you, who helped me to find a better self—a self that at last finds *you*."

"I will go."

"To-morrow, then, I will write you of them."

He was gone.

In a few days she received a letter which contained the narrative of his sojourn with Peter and Maria, and a letter of introduction to them. She showed the letter to Barclay.

"Shall you meet him there?"

She gave him no answer.

"On what terms are you with yourself?" he continued.

"To answer candidly, bad terms."

"Could you marry that beggar on better?"

"Alas ! no."

"Tell me, are you satisfied with your choice?"

She looked so irresolute that he trembled and was sorry that he had asked the question. Her better angel took wings, however, and she laid her hand on his shoulder, saying, "I make no other."

So she went on her travels with Barclay in her train, and Osgood went on a voyage in the *Stormy Petrel* as third mate. When autumn came, and the travelers had returned to town, Lily grew miser-

able. One day she told Barclay that she wanted to read him a poem. He composed himself to listen, and she read "The Palace of Art."

"What is it that will take away my sin,
And save me lest I die?"—

she repeated.

"Barclay," she entreated, "let me throw *your* royal robes away, and go to those friends of Osgood's, where I may learn that I am either worthy of you or of him."

A stormy scene ensued. He would neither allow her to go, he said, nor would he give her back her promise to him. But she was firm, and said that she must go. His imprecations and his tears agitated her, but did not shake her resolution. She had a battle with her father also when she mentioned the subject, but she triumphed over him so far as to make him promise to accompany her. She sent the letter of introduction to Peter, and received a pithy reply from him. He advised her to come. With Peter and Maria she learned why Osgood wished her to visit them. She left them with a request that they should allow her to return whenever she should wish.

She found Barclay sullen and unhappy; but in spite of himself she convinced him that they were not intended for each other. It was a work to persuade him to the contrary; but at last they parted not as foes but friends.

When the engagement was annulled she took pains to ascertain from the owners of the *Stormy*

Petrel what time she was expected home, and before the date of her arrival she went on a visit to Peter and Maria.

There she studied the Marine List till she saw that the *Stormy Petrel* was in port. She said nothing of the fact to Peter, but as he read the Marine List too, he found it out for himself. He went away in his wagon a few mornings afterward, and when he returned Osgood was beside him.

"Thee is as white as a ghost, Lily," said Maria, after a few minutes.

Osgood put his arm round her, and they kissed each other. Peter pushed his hat on the back of his head, and kissed Maria, and said, "Give me my dinner."



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